

A Healing Approach to Teaching: A Case Study

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Abstract

Healing in education is both an ancient and an emerging idea. Approaching students as whole beings with a need for balance and health of their mental, emotional, spiritual and physical selves is not a common teaching practice in North American educational systems, but one which has had some success and demanded research.

This research study examined one teacher's approach to working with at-risk students in an integrated school-linked services collegiate. It documented her practices and beliefs about teaching at-risk students, and explored the interactions and strategies she used with these students.

This was a qualitative case study, a tradition which allowed the researcher to observe the natural teaching conditions of the teacher participant, selected by the researcher for her superior reputation of working with at-risk students. The study, conducted by one researcher, took place in an urban Saskatchewan high school during five weeks in May and June of 2002. The methods used to collect that data were semi-structured interview, classroom observation and document analysis. Use of these methods served to triangulate the data. A reflective journal was also kept by the researcher. Data analysis was done inductively, through a search and discovery of themes in the written records, data were then reduced, organized and a description of the case written.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the teacher

participant used a healing approach to teaching and endeavoured to make her classroom a place of learning and healing. Her emphasis on students as whole people combined with her unique character, beliefs, practices, and talents harmonized into practicing this approach with her students. Extending love and showing care to interact and form relationships with students was the basis of her practice. A variety of teaching strategies were employed to reach and help heal students. Building a safe and caring classroom and establishing a sense of community in the classroom and school for her students supported the healing approach. Accessing on-site human support services for students through referrals was a great asset to the teacher. The healing approach was underpinned by the teacher participant's belief in holistic teaching and the necessity for hope, honesty and respect in her students and herself.

The study allows for increased understanding about healing and its potential for use in public education. A number of recommendations for teacher practice were made as a result of the findings of the study

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CHAPTER ONE

Building on Strengths

Meet Rebecca, (an alias), a seventeen year old mother of four year old Jordan. Her mother, who left school after grade ten, raised Rebecca and her four brothers and sisters on Social Services funding, moving frequently between Saskatchewan and Alberta. Rebecca was diagnosed with dyslexia in grade two, but despite struggling with academics, was described by her teachers as a happy and cooperative child. By grade five, her teachers noticed her enthusiastic nature fading. Upon investigation, a case worker discovered Rebecca was enduring physical and sexual abuse by her eldest brother. Both children continued to live in the home. She was described by her mother as “out of control” by age twelve, using drugs and alcohol heavily. Jordan was born just after her thirteenth birthday. Rebecca tried to be a good mom, although she was still smoking marijuana and living with a boyfriend who used harder drugs and did not work or attend school. Her mother encouraged her to go back to school. Rebecca decided to return as a grade nine student and arrived on the school steps wounded, but hopeful. She had been out of school for so long and had many gaps in her skills. Could she graduate from grade twelve? Could she learn to become a healthy, contributing member of society, confident in her abilities as a mother and a person? What school and teachers could possibly accommodate all of her needs? How could her strengths be built upon and her wounds be healed, so she could succeed in her education?

My career has been spent mostly with students who, like Rebecca, are described as at-risk. I thrived when working with these students and at the same time, I met many teachers who would rather work with any other students but these young people. After teaching English in an urban Saskatchewan high school for eleven years, my entire teaching career to that date, I felt a strong need to examine the impact the students, staff and school community had on me and also who I have become as a teacher. I also considered questions about the approaches other teachers and I used to teach, to assist and to form relationships with students. What worked best with students to help them be successful?

I was hired at the school for my strong student-centred beliefs which I put into practice throughout my time there. My former colleagues and I care deeply about the welfare of students. But, the commonality in teaching approaches goes beyond simply caring, to a belief in the strength of the students we serve. Often these students' strengths have been wounded by mistreatment, discouragement, rejection or social disadvantage. The pressure these students deal with would paralyze the spirit of an average human being. However, when they meet school staff who expect the best from them, they begin to find hope. When they are introduced into a setting of services that can address their spectrum of needs, they begin to find relief. When they meet individual teachers who believe that they need to find health and balance in all aspects of their selves, they can begin to rebuild their lives, to heal their wounds.

After reflecting on what this staff offers students, the researcher wanted the opportunity to see a particular teacher in action, one whom at-risk students seemed to honour and respect, a teacher around whom students seemed to thrive. The researcher wished to observe the practices and beliefs of this teacher of at-risk students.

Significance of the Study

With increasing pressure to serve at-risk youth, schools are given responsibility for educating society's most profoundly challenging young people. We know that we must educate our youth, but we do not know how to educate all youth. Some teachers, however, seem to have a talent for working with at-risk youth. This study presents a description of one such teacher and her teaching approach. By studying someone who is celebrated as a master teacher and treasured by a wide array of students, we may gain insight into an approach used with at-risk students that could help other teachers and administrators who work with similar populations.

Research Question

In what ways did the teacher participant practice a healing approach to teaching?

Purpose of the Study

This descriptive study presents one teacher's approach to teaching at-risk students who attended an integrated school-linked services school. Strategies and approaches she used to assist students to heal, employed through interactions and relationships were observed. The study sought to address these areas, as well as to increase understanding

about healing and its potential for use in public education.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

At-risk is a term used to describe students are who “for various reasons such as behavioral, economic, cultural, physical or mental, are in danger of being unable to complete a K-12 education” (Tymchak, 2000, p. 115). Failure in school often excludes these individuals from mainstream society (Dryfoos, 1994). These young people may be the victims of poverty (Duhon-Ross, 1999). Others may have multiple economic, educational, social and health difficulties which prevent them from enjoying full and rewarding lives. Gordon and Yowell (1994) concluded that at-risk status is “a function of the inappropriateness of developmental environments to meet the needs of the person and that a focus on the deficient environments may be more productive than a focus on the characteristics of the person” (p. 53). At-risk students are people who are having problems in living, rather than people who are problems. The researcher recognized “at-risk” as a label at best and pejorative at worst, but has not managed to coin a better term that reflects the strengths of the individuals and the deficits of school and society. Care is employed throughout the thesis to use the term in a way that does not blame the individual.

Community school is a designation of elementary and secondary schools in Saskatchewan

with a certain population of at-risk children. “The program provides funding to these schools to facilitate the involvement of community services, as well as parents, in fulfilling all the needs of the students” (Tymchak, 2000).

Interagency is a term describing cooperation and collaboration between and among agencies in meeting the needs of students in more than one service area (Tymchak, 2000).

Integrated school-linked services is an interagency program which provides, through the school system, the various services children and youth may need (Tymchak, 2000).

Approach to teaching describes the unique way a teacher works with students, based on her or his beliefs, values, experiences, talents and vision of good teaching.

Holistic education has as its goal, competence in all aspects of the person: cognitive, physical, social and spiritual. Academic success is dependent on providing support in all four areas. Curricula can be adapted to enhance prevention and intervention strategies. Services, programs and staff should reinforce each other and be responsive to the needs of the individual (Nutana Collegiate, 2000).

Healing, as part of a holistic philosophy of education, seeks to address the needs of students who have wounds to one or more parts of their cognitive, physical, social and spiritual selves. Healing seeks to help students bring wellness into their lives. The phrases *healing as an approach*, *a healing approach*, *use of healing in*

education or teaching and healing students are used interchangeably here with *healing*.

Wellness is health and balance in all parts of the self.

Boundaries of the Study

The study was of one teacher who possesses a Bachelor of Education degree and who teaches in an urban public high school. Use of the case study method ensured depth by focusing on one participant. The participant was chosen as an exceptional case (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996), referred to by Merriam (1998) as a unique sample. Gall et al. asserted that use of an exceptional case is helpful “because teacher characteristics to be studied are easy to detect and occur frequently” (p. 232). The study did not examine student achievement or student perceptions of the teacher.

Assumptions of the Study

Best and Kahn (1993) defined assumptions as “statements of what the researcher believes to be facts but cannot verify” (p. 40). In keeping with this definition, the researcher assumed:

1. that a descriptive study on the use of healing as one teacher’s approach was an acceptable and appropriate method of research;
2. that every teacher has a unique approach to working with students. The uniqueness lies in the background, experiences, personality, beliefs, values, practices and talents of the individual teacher. Teachers may use

similar strategies to help students learn, but the methods will translate differently from teacher to teacher, to their students;

3. that teachers can learn from experiences and best practices of other teachers. These learnings could be extended to include the approach of healing;
4. that healing was not a single-discipline concept or practice, yet it has some unique qualities in the context of education;
5. that a lack of analysis in the literature on the use of healing as an approach in teaching was an incentive to pursue research on the subject in this manner;
6. that healing was not exclusive to one race or culture. Knowledge about healing can transcend cultures and be used to help students regardless of their cultural or racial background;
7. that a descriptive inquiry in the tradition of a case study can increase the understanding of the nature of healing and its applicability in public education.

Delimitations of the Study

Best and Kahn (1993) defined delimitations as “the boundaries of the study”

(p.40). This was a bounded study in the following ways:

1. The study described one teacher’s approach to healing. Healing, as it

is addressed or used in disciplines other than education, such as in medicine, psychiatry, or theology was not investigated;

2. The study described a one teacher's work exclusively with at-risk students of a variety of cultural, economic and educational backgrounds;
3. The study was delimited to resources accessible within the time frame and physical locality of study;
4. The research was a preliminary and exploratory study meant to discover approaches used for healing of students by one teacher and implications for the use of healing by other teachers.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations are constraints upon the study that are acknowledged in order to avoid misrepresentation. Best and Kahn (1993) defined limitations as "those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study and their application to other situations" (p. 40). The following were the conditions and restrictions that bore on this study:

1. Healing is not an easy construct to define. There has been little written about the topic in the context of education or schools. Within areas where healing has been researched, much of the focus has been first, on the pathological features of health, and next on a singular aspect of healing, like emotional or physical healing. The literature on healing in education

is largely, but not exclusively by Aboriginal researchers, based on practices with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal at-risk students. The at-risk student population taught by the teacher participant was approximately 25% of Aboriginal descent;

2. The researcher is aware of her personal biases in analyzing the concept and the use of healing by the teacher participant. The concept holds explicit personal value and the researcher recognizes her subjectivity. The researcher is not of Aboriginal descent;
3. Because a single case has been selected to understand this particular case in depth, what is generally true of the many will not be ascertained by this method (Merriam, 1998);
4. When any one research methodology is chosen, such as the case study method, there are natural limitations on the study findings.

Context of the Study

The study took place in an urban Saskatchewan collegiate, serving grades 9-12, designated as Community School by Saskatchewan Learning. The collegiate was an integrated school-linked services site involving many human service agencies. The average age of students in the collegiate was 18 years. An annual student survey revealed that approximately 80% of the students were at risk of not completing high school and had already attended two or more other high schools. Nearly half of the students were

clients of Social Services and one quarter of the total population had been involved two or more times with the criminal justice system. Nearly 40% claimed an addiction to alcohol and or drugs. Approximately 25 % were student parents. Many students lived without parents or guardians.

Organization of the Thesis

This chapter has presented a context for a healing approach in teaching at-risk students. The rationale for the research, questions guiding the research, the definition of terms and the boundaries of the study have also been presented. Chapter two is a review of the relevant literature on healing in education, with a look at programs and theories throughout North America. Chapter three outlines the proposed methodology used to conduct the research. Chapter four presents the findings of the research interspersed with discussion and reflections of the researcher. Finally, chapter five summarizes the findings, suggests implications of the study results and makes recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The interrelationship between strong bodies and healthy minds was established long ago. Traditional teachings of many of the world's Indigenous cultures stress balance and health in all parts of the person (Arrien, 1993). Healing through storytelling, mysticism, spiritualism and art are ancient practices (Livo, 2001). Medicine and counseling are essentially healing professions working with people in need (Steinberg & Whiteside, 1999). Why then would educators not study and practice healing of the whole person when encountering students who are not well? But healing as an approach to teaching has not been formally researched and reported in the literature, nor is it taught as a possibility in teacher training. That being said, there are researchers and teachers (Arrien, 1993; Benard, 1993; Brendtro & Brokenleg, 2001; Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1992; Brown, D'Emidio-Caston & Benard, 2001; Dryfoos, 1994, 2000; Graveline, 1998; Katz & St. Denis, 1991; Kennedy & Morton, 1999; Krovetz, 1999; Lantieri, 2001; Nutana Collegiate, 2000; Palmer, 2001; Regnier, 1995; Werner & Smith, 2001) who discuss helping to heal students in one or more aspect(s) of the student's self, as part of an approach to education. Terminology for helping students to heal include such words and phrases as: "using the Healer's way" (Arrien, 1993), "reclaiming" and "mending the broken Circle" (Brendtro & Brokenleg, 1992; Brendtro et al., 2001), "the mind-body connection" (Dryfoos, 2000), "teacher as healer" (Graveline, 1998; Katz &

St. Denis, 1991), “a school for healing” (Kennedy & Morton, 1999), “fostering resiliency” (Benard, 1993; Krovetz, 1999, Werner & Smith, 2001), “nurturing young people’s inner lives” (Lantieri, 2001), “supporting wellness in all aspects of our being” (Nutana Collegiate, 2000), “teaching from the heart” (Palmer, 2001), and “healing education” (Regnier, 1995). Although the descriptors vary, the common thread of teachers working to help bring balance into the lives of students, runs through all of the writings. To understand the healing approach, the students most needing this approach must first be described. Following this, the literature review reports the ideas, discoveries and investigations of educators who have considered healing as a part of teaching.

The Wounded Student

Students in need of healing are often described as “at-risk.” Children and youth may be considered at-risk due to a variety of disadvantages. This descriptor is used to refer to individuals who are subject to one or more risk producing circumstances or conditions (Rossi, 1994). The most recognizable symptom of at-risk status is failure in school. High school completion is a significant marker of future success (Dryfoos, 1994). Largely, these young people are victims of poverty (Duhon-Ross, 1999). Learning disabilities are commonly cited as contributing factors. Many students have histories of violence, physical and sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, incarceration, and family dysfunction. Many are considered at risk for suicide. Some have severe anger management issues. They may be teen parents or live without parents or guardians. Often

they are clients of social welfare and may have parents who are welfare recipients (Tymchak, 2000). Isolation because of cultural differences can be a contributor to this status. Any one of these circumstances could place an individual in peril; most at-risk children and youth typically have multiple complications in their lives (Duhon-Ross).

Although the situation of at-risk students demands attention, students and their families will seldom ask for help. Many families have had unfavourable experiences with human service agencies or are mystified with how the systems work. They may feel shame in not being able to solve their own problems. They might fear change or the unpredictability of an unusual setting (Kronick, 1997). Negative associations that parents may have had with schooling can have an impact on how they deal with their student's struggles (Brendtro et al., 1992). Parents, as well may need to heal. Working with students and their families holistically, helping them to deal with their problems and striving to educate them to prevent further problems in living should be the primary objectives of the school (Dryfoos, 1994). Teachers who approach working with the students holistically may be described as using a healing approach.

What is Healing?

The concept of healing, striving for wholeness, health, and balance is shared across cultures, practices and disciplines. In the last twenty years, the concept of wellness has been developing in several disciplines to describe the "total person approach" (Witmer & Sweeney, 1992) for improving people's lives in a proactive way. In 1947, the

World Health Organization defined health as “physical, mental, and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, as cited in Witmer & Sweeney, p. 140). Spiritual well-being was recently added to this definition (Witmer & Sweeney). Stiffarm (1998) suggested, “there are many ways to heal. We heal through individual counseling, group therapy and use of tranquilizers, anti-depressants or painkillers. We use court systems and the clergy to help heal. We also heal by yawning, sleeping, exercising, journaling and talking” (p. 1). Healing in education is both an ancient and emerging idea with much yet to be discovered. The ideas put forth by the following researchers and writers are offered for consideration in the defining of healing applications to educational philosophy and teaching approaches.

Steinberg and Whiteside (1999) said a fundamental lesson of Eastern or Oriental healing is that everything is connected. Chinese medicine is characterized by a holistic approach, with no part of the person separable from any other. Since all things are related, a change in any one of them creates a shift in others. Eastern medicine asks whether it ever makes sense to consider the body and the psyche as separate.

In North American medical practice, healing rituals may involve medicines, doctors, nurses, hospitals and research (Livo, 2001). There has been an increasing interest in holistic, mind-body approaches, including the idea that humans have a great deal of self-healing potential (Bohart & Tallman, 1999). These psychotherapists argued that people have a great capacity for not only physical, but also psychological self-healing.

Therapists need to activate the self-healing potential in clients and be "resource providers, information providers, idea providers, strategy providers, supporters, mentors and coaches" (p. 95).

Within the area of counseling, there are many models for healing. One of particular relevance to this study is Witmer and Sweeney's (1992) holistic model of wellness and prevention over the life span. The model incorporates concepts from psychology, sociology, anthropology, religion, and education (p. 140). Experimental and research data were used from personality, social, clinical, and health psychology. Stress management and behavioral medicine research were applied to develop the wellness part of the theory. Witmer and Sweeney applied their "knowledge on wellness [to] propose a 'global village' ecology and cosmic consciousness" (p.140) that stresses interconnectedness of all things, with major themes relating to wholeness in mind, body, spirit and community. It is arranged in a circle, with spirituality at the centre. Surrounding the essential core are four "life tasks" of self-regulation, work, friendship and love. These life tasks interact with life forces of community, family, education, government, business, religion, and media. Events on a global scale have an impact on and are affected by the life tasks and forces (p. 140). Similar to the circle in other areas of healing, the Witmer and Sweeney (1992) model illustrated the self seeking balance and harmony with all parts interacting. The counselor as a healer is a guide for the client in a journey to find wholeness and understanding of the interconnectedness of all parts of life.

Adult educator and artist Karpiak (1999) talked about healing and creative pursuits, such as music, art, writing and photography.

Healing, I believe, is the complementary process of creativity in our transitions. . . . Healing is essential whether we have experienced events as woundings and betrayals, or as gifts and opportunities. . . . events carry a demand to be worked through, integrated, made whole. We experience a coming together, things become clear, consolidated.

(p. 45)

Healing, according to Karpiak, is an essential element of development in life. Healing involves new growth and new growth is what creativity is.

In the tradition of folklore, healing is often seen as a transformation or making whole (Livo, 2001). Folklore tells us of healing traditions and medical lore from the past, such as use of leeches or wine. Some natural healing remedies of the past which in the modern world have been considered barbaric, are being used again as alternatives to certain Western medicine's more invasive techniques (Livo). Other cultures use music, herbs, spices and aromatics. Healing is also common subject matter in religious stories. In the Holy Scriptures, healing by the laying on of hands creates miracles. Now, traditional stories and storytellers are used at corporate stress management seminars, hospitals and nursing homes (Livo). Ancient and traditional healing methods are coming back as people search for practices to make them whole.

According to Arrien (1993), the ability to heal is available to all of us. She stated,

My research has demonstrated that virtually all shamanic traditions draw on the power of four archetypes in order to live in harmony and balance with our environment and with our own inner nature: the Warrior, the Healer, the Visionary and the Teacher. Because each archetype draws on the deepest mythic roots of humanity, we too can tap into their wisdom. When we learn to live these archetypes within ourselves, we will begin to heal ourselves and our fragmented world. (p. 1)

Even though these four archetypes are present in most shamanic traditions of Indigenous people, Arrien stressed that “it is important to understand that they are universal and available to all humankind, regardless of context, culture, structure and practice” (p. 2). Indigenous people consider it essential to be balanced in all four archetypes: however, for the purposes of this study, the theory and practice in the Way of the Healer will be explored exclusively.

The Way of the Healer requires a person to “pay attention to what has heart and meaning” (p. 2).

Healers in all major traditions recognize that the power of love is the most potent healing force available to all human beings. Effective Healers from any culture are those who extend the arms of love. (p. 49)

Healers extend this love through “gratitude, acknowledgment, and validation” (p.8).

People acknowledge each other’s skills, character qualities, appearance and the impact we make on each other (p. 49). Healers in any culture are inherently skilled at acknowledgment; they also validate and accept other people and are grateful for the presence of others and their gifts. It is the Healer’s way to give to receive and to connect.

One of the types of universal love people are able to explore is “professional love between teacher and student” (p. 52). This love is a doorway to healing. Achterberg (as cited in Arrien) in her book, *Woman as Healer* listed the following concepts which contribute to an explanation of healing and how love is a vital impetus for healing:

1. Healing is a lifelong journey toward wholeness.
2. Healing is remembering what has been forgotten about connection, unity and interdependence among all things living and nonliving.
3. Healing is embracing what is most feared.
4. Healing is opening what has been closed, softening what has hardened into obstruction.
5. Healing is entering into the transcendent, timeless moment when one experiences the divine.
6. Healing is creativity and passion and love.
7. Healing is seeking and expressing self in its fullness its light and

shadow, its male and female.

8. Healing is learning to trust life.

When we are underdeveloped in these concepts, we find a closed door to love and health. (pp. 52-53)

The Way of the Healer guides people to keep their hearts open. Many Indigenous cultures believe that the “heart is the bridge between Father Sky and Mother Earth” (Arrien, 1993, p. 50). The heart is the source for maintaining spiritual and emotional health. Individuals should observe where in their experience they are half-hearted rather than full-hearted, when they have a confused and doubting heart rather than a clear heart, when they have a closed, defensive heart instead of an open heart and when they are experiencing weakheartedness rather than courageous, strong-heartedness (p. 50). When people are strong, clear, open and full in their hearts, they can pay attention to what has heart and meaning and follow the Way of the Healer.

What, then is common to all of these theories and practices of healing?

Interconnectedness of all things is an recurring theme. The spirit or spirituality is a central part of the person and of the concept of interconnectedness. The major theme is one of wholeness or health of mind, body and spirit. Wholeness is striven for by a search for balance in the self. This striving can be called the process of healing. People may search out healers, but the ability to heal lies within themselves. Healers are guides on the journey toward balance or wholeness. The aforementioned theories of healing hold each

of these views in common.

Learning from the Sacred Circle

For many cultures throughout the world, the circle is important in healing and in life (Livo, 2001). The Sacred Circle is honoured by most Indigenous cultures of the world (Graveline, 1998). The concept of healing as part of the Circle is prevalent in these cultures and involves the restoration of balance in all parts of the self (Arrien, 1993). Some community schools in Saskatchewan use this perspective as the basis for their educational philosophy (Regnier, 1995; Saskatchewan Education, 1996). Saulis (as cited in Durst, 2000) explained the role of the Medicine Wheel or the Sacred Circle in the healing process for Aboriginal people and their communities today, in Canada.

The concept of the circle is prevalent in indigenous cultures and is frequently used to organize, understand and *know* [author's emphasis] life. The reader must appreciate that there are similar aspects to all people and we are holistically interconnected both to each other (externally) and to the various directions within each of us (internally).

An event, in one direction inexorably impacts on the other aspects or directions of the person. Each of us has four directions, which are the spiritual (the East direction), the emotional (the South direction), the physical (the West direction), and the intellectual (the North direction).

(p. 47)

Saulis further expanded on each of the directions and their connection to healing, beginning with the East, the Spiritual, as follows:

The East direction focuses on our sense of the existence of forces greater than that of the physical world which one sees and knows in the conscious world, and it lies opposite to the Physical direction, the West. The Spiritual direction provides the knowledge that there exists a presence that directs us and gives us a sense of a Being that is connected to the spiritual realm. . . . It is in the Spiritual direction that one finds the “connectedness” of all things. The East is the place of new beginnings, of new life. . . . In the context of healing, the spiritual direction shows us how to balance our lives with the other directions. . . . Often, in hurt and abused people, this is the realm to which they reach to sustain themselves when all else is in ruins. This spiritual discovery or awareness gives new meaning and significance to one’s life and one’s role in the community. It also forms the basis of a community’s culture, its values, beliefs and its norms. (p. 50)

Saulis described the South or Emotional direction next.

The South includes the psycho social needs of the individual in the context of the extended family and the community and it lies opposite to the Intellectual , the North direction. In Aboriginal knowledge, the

South acknowledges the importance of time and relationships that are critical factors in ensuring that the emotional needs of the individual are met. It is through time that deep ties and strong bonds develop between family and community members. It develops a sense of belonging and community adhesion where expectations and roles can be fulfilled. . . . The emotional direction teaches one can touch others through feelings.

(p. 51)

The connection between the South direction and healing was explained by Saulis as follows:

The person is not alone but is connected to the present extended family and to those ancestors who have gone before. Relationships among the family members are the result of the historical interrelatedness of the community. At times, the relationship can be a negative force. This situation occurs when there is a history of abuse, violence or dysfunctional behaviours in the family. However, when a positive relationship exists, this connectedness to the family and community can be a source of strength and a facilitator of the healing process. (p. 51)

Of the Physical, the West direction of the Circle and its connection to healing, Saulis described, "On the individual level, the direction includes physical needs to nurture and protect the body, including the basics such as food, clothing, and shelter but it also

includes health care services and protection services” (p. 52). The individual learns about being respectful, kind and responsible for the care of self and others around them.

Finally, Saulis explained the North or Intellectual parts of the Sacred Circle. “North is the direction associated with the Mental aspects of Creation. Here, one acquires knowledge and understanding which, when applied, generates wisdom. It is the place where elders share their experience and counsel based on their wisdom gained through years of living”.(p. 52).

The holistic perspective as represented by the Medicine Wheel allows education to be seen as a complex integrated whole: psychological, spiritual, emotional and physical are all part of the human consciousness and are inseparable (Graveline, 1998). Using Traditional methods, a teacher would never attempt to practice healing in one area, separate from the others, although division of these domains is something required in “Eurocentric pedagogical paradigms” (p. 76). The medicine wheel paradigm “challenges us to embrace the circular, ever-evolving dynamic captured in a single phrase: all life is a circle” (p. 75).

At the centre of the Medicine Wheel quadrants is the self. When any of the parts are out of balance, the other aspects of the self cannot function well (Brendtro et al., 1992; Graveline, 1998; Krawll, 1994). Krawll noted that healing for each of us, seems to be culturally based and carries many definitions within the context of different languages. “It is a word used frequently, but in many ways lacks a common definition which

enhances our ability to work more collaboratively towards its end” (p. 18). Healing starts “within the individual or with self” (p 19), obtaining a sense of wholeness or balance by addressing all parts of one’s life concurrently and not in isolation. Healing used as teaching approach therefore addresses all parts of the student, the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional.

Teacher As Healer

In the practices of traditional teaching among Aboriginal people like the Cree and the Fijians, there is a model of the teacher as healer (Katz & St. Denis 1991).

Traditional Indigenous education is symbolized by the process of listening to the stories told by elders so intently that the elders can hear the listening and, therefore, fully tell the stories. Such stories impart spiritual knowledge and appear among Indigenous people throughout the world.

(p. 24)

Healing is defined by these writers as “transitioning toward meaning, balance, connectedness and wholeness” (p. 24). The teacher works to nurture connections between the individual, community and culture. Katz and St. Denis described the development of the teacher as healer:

For the ‘teacher as healer’ character development becomes the critical and necessary context for knowledge and educational technologies. More than cognitive developments, it is qualities of the heart -- courage,

commitment, belief and intuitive understanding -- that opens such teachers to learning and leads them to become educators. Teaching as healing is an education of the heart. But 'heart' among Fijians and Cree people is not limited to the heart organ, not to feelings or emotion; heart involves the total person as he or she functions in his or her deepest essence. Teaching as healing is therefore essential life education. (p. 28)

A teacher as healer was traditionally an elder or medicine person. The teacher would guide and inspire the learners, was filled with spiritual understanding and sought to make things whole. This person was a servant of the community, teaching by example, inspired by actual life experiences. Respect characterized all interconnections fostered between the teacher, the students, the subject, the school, community and the universe (p. 24). The teacher loved and cared for students. As well, knowledge was "generated in a dialogue between student and teacher, between school and community" (p. 26). The contribution of the teacher was seen in this way,

With the 'teacher as healer', teaching becomes a human enterprise. The 'teacher as healer' is ultimately valued by her community and fulfills a revered responsibility. Traditional teachers were responsible for the quality of life and the full range of living; they did not shy away from facing the critical issues in the development of the child. (p. 24)

However, the teacher's work was only one of the ways knowledge was transmitted; thus knowledge became a resource, not a commodity.

In contrast, contemporary Western teachers are dubbed, "technocrats" (Katz & St. Denis, 1991, p. 25) who seem to believe in their ownership of techniques and knowledge. Students must compete for a teacher's attention. The teacher focuses on putting knowledge into students, thereby sacrificing relationships which might be built with the students. Students lose the power of developing a process and understanding of learning. The spiritual element does not exist in this kind of teacher. However, Katz and St. Denis (1991) asserted that the traditional teachers are present in Cree and Fijian cultures today and they can be looked to as sources of wisdom to meet challenges in education in other cultures. "There is a need for teachers to become more like healers and less like technocrats . . . Teachers, in becoming healers, could truly teach" (p. 26).

Graveline (1998) also explored the idea of "teacher as healer: a personal challenge to Eurocentric hegemony" (p. 79). She practices healing as part of her vision for teaching, a model developed through "revisioning of Ancestral Aboriginal philosophy, combined with [her] daily lived experience as an anti-racist, feminist, experiential educator and activist" (p. 85). It was stressed that the teacher as healer must first be healed, her daily life must be in balance:

We cannot begin to help other people deal with their imbalances unless we first begin to heal ourselves and heal with our own imbalances We

can only facilitate a healing journey to the degree that we as healers have had the courage to journey on our own. . . . The healer's openness to change is a key element in the healing process. (Absolon, as cited in Graveline, 1998, p. 79)

Graveline claimed to "walk her talk," telling her own stories and following the path of the medicine wheel. Teaching is not an exercise from which she is separate; she is an integral part of the process, emphasizing honesty, openness and authenticity. Her role is to help bring "a person to a place (mentally, spiritually, emotionally or physically) where that person may, in turn, become a healer/teacher to others" (p. 79). Absolon (as cited in Graveline, 1998) said "each person is a teacher and a healer with a strength to offer and a weakness or pain to heal" (p. 79), echoed by Palmer (2000) and Santorelli (1999). The teacher as healer "may help to awaken the inspiration of each learner to be open to what they each need to know to achieve balance and interconnectedness in their own lives" (Graveline, 1998, p. 80). Graveline has used storytelling, metaphor, meditation, rituals, and art as teaching strategies to get at students "right-brain energies" (p. 77) necessary for holistic learning. Healing pedagogy based on the Sacred Circle has also been practiced by other schools and teachers in the following two examples, Joe Duquette School and the Circle of Courage schools.

A Healing Education

Joe Duquette High School is located in Saskatoon and was established in 1980 to

provide an education for urban, Native youth. Their healing approach to education is based on a holistic spiritual view of students and their place in the world (Regnier, 1995).

The mission statement for Joe Duquette follows:

The Joe Duquette High School is a healing place which nurtures the mind, body and soul of its students. The school offers a program of studies which affirms the contemporary worldview of Indian people. The school supports the uniqueness and creativity of the individual and fosters self-actualization in a cooperative environment. (Regnier, 1995, p. 314)

Aboriginal spirituality, using the Sacred Circle within Cree cosmology, is the foundation of the school's programs. This belief system "sees human nature and nature as connected and unified, views time as cyclical rather than linear, and allows for a sense of ultimate meaning and purpose with a heritage open to cross-cultural possibilities" (Regnier, 1995, p. 314). Working with Katz and St. Denis' (1991) model, the teacher as healer seeks to make things whole. The teacher as healer is responsible "not only for envisioning the whole and understanding the wholeness but also for allowing learning which strives for wholeness" (Regnier, 1995, p. 319). The teacher must serve the goodness of the whole family, community or nation and provide for the learning of all students. This includes providing learning opportunities to "marginalized, denied or rejected" (p. 319) students. Teachers need to take on approaches and structures that promote holistic learning by marginalized students (Regnier).

Strategies at Joe Duquette to teach and create a positive, cooperative learning environment include: daily sweet grass ceremonies, sweat lodges, talking and healing circles, storytelling circles, improvisational theatre techniques, as well as drumming and dancing. Social problems in students' lives are met directly with program referrals, such as peer-support and drug and alcohol treatment centres. Students are also taught survival skills, described as "self-determination, self-sufficiency, and cultural revival to move beyond multicultural, assimilationist, and integrationist ideologies which disregard cultural alienation, poverty, powerlessness, and a distinct world-view" (Regnier, 1995, p.315). These practices have allowed Joe Duquette to be a place of spiritual practice, cultural enrichment, social support, and pedagogical development to help heal students and to provide an academic environment.

Healing as Reclaiming

The work of Brendtro et al. (1992) drew on the wisdom of traditional Native Americans and educational practices of experts to develop an educational philosophy of "reclaiming" and bringing students into the Circle of Courage, modeled on the Sacred Circle. Reclaiming youth at-risk is explained as restoring youth "to experience attachment, achievement, autonomy and altruism - the four well springs of courage" (p. 69) or profiles in development. Reclaiming requires the teacher to move past the deviance and dysfunction of the young person and address his or her most basic needs. The concept of reclaiming youth was pioneered by a Polish youth worker, Korczak (as

cited in Brendtro et al., 1992) who worked with homeless youth in the early 1900s. He believed in respecting the dignity of children, educating them to unleash their intelligence and involving youth in creating caring communities. Brendtro et al. melded Korczak's work with Native American philosophies of child management where the central purpose in life was the education and empowerment of children, with practices based on the number four. Brendtro et al. explained that four has sacred meaning for Native people, who view the person as standing in the centre of a circle surrounded by the four directions. Brendtro et al. developed four essential elements of a reclaiming environment in education: relating to the reluctant, brain friendly learning, discipline for responsibility and the courage to care. Each of these elements contain strategies to bring a young person back into balance with the self in the four quadrants of the cognitive, emotional, spiritual and physical.

This philosophy is practiced throughout the United States at Circle of Courage schools which emphasize healthy survival through balance and harmony. Spirituality is infused into these schools where students are taught to develop and maintain a sense of belonging to everything that surrounds them. Brendtro and Brokenleg (2001) said "the foundation for our spirituality is the belief that all children are sacred spiritual beings, and our responsibility as older brothers and sisters is to enhance and nurture them" (p. 44). These schools, operating in rural and urban areas across the United States with students from a variety of cultural and economic backgrounds, work to "maintain harmony and

balance for all of Mother Earth's inhabitants" (p. 44).

Both the Circle of Courage schools and Joe Duquette School use the Sacred Circle as a basis for healing, balance and learning. Other schools in North America which have healing and learning as primary goals, but use different operating philosophies - the full-service community school model and the Center for Alternative Learning - are discussed in the following two sections.

Wellness in the Full-Service Community School

Dryfoos (2000) studied how the full-service community school brings stability and wellness into the lives of at-risk students. Dryfoos was an vocal advocate for the past fifteen years of full-service community schools, also known as community schools or integrated school-linked service schools for at-risk students and their families. Students are the focus of this model. They arrive at the school hoping to complete their high school education. The school's goal is for them to complete their schooling and become healthy, happy, contributing members of their communities; their academic success hinges on their wellness. The students and oftentimes their family members need multiple, well integrated and readily accessible services. The routes that schools design to attain these goals are almost as numerous as the students. Some schools provide many on-site services and options for academic courses; other schools settle on a smaller selection of services and community programs, especially if the targeted students and families require intensive intervention.

Dryfoos (2000) studied sites throughout the United States and believed these schools bring together the concepts of mind, body and building into an integrated approach of quality education and comprehensive support services. Dryfoos had a vision for what a fully realized, full-service community school might look like. In the model school, the mind is addressed through carefully planned academic programs. The body is addressed through on site primary health services, like medical, dental, and addictions services. Health education is built into the curriculum, including a comprehensive physical education program. Trained health educators or youth workers from the community teach social and behavioral skills. Design of the building to include community as a vital part of the school is also outlined. Dryfoos saw this picture as an ideal school that could address the needs of the students. Wellness of students is stressed; it is a place for community and family education with extended day and year-round programs which may be offered by nonprofessional members of the community. All programs seek to enhance family and community participation and responsibility in education and care of children.

Physical and mental health needs of the students are addressed by linking social and health services to the schools. Sometimes the services are located in the school (school-based) or closely linked by special referral systems (school-linked). Efforts toward service integration also came in response to criticism of duplication and fragmentation of services and aim to reform the social welfare delivery

system (Dryfoos, 1994). Teams of service providers provide services for students and families. Programs are also preventative and facilitate early intervention, such as prenatal and early childhood courses. The full-service community school model reforms social and health services, supports families and develops communities. After school, weekend and summer programs for students and parents, parent/guardian education, family support and coordinated services for students are typically included in this school model. The vital aspect missed in many high schools for at-risk students, is family support and education, more often seen in the elementary and middle school models. School support is especially needed in areas of high poverty where other community supports have been overwhelmed or eroded. The school and perhaps churches or cultural organizations may be the last line of defense against the cycle of poverty and marginalization (Dryfoos, 2000).

A holistic approach to empowering students stops short if their home environments are bypassed by service providers. In these settings, a teacher has many resources to help students bring stability and balance to their lives. These resources are often on-site human service providers. Collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders must flourish in order for the programs to work. Integration of services and community involvement requires an atmosphere of trust, risk taking and flexibility. Relationships and teams must be built within the structure for honesty and openness to thrive. The teacher can then refer students to services, as well as collaborate with the

other professionals in the school to address the needs of the whole student. Thus, Dryfoos (2000) presented a model and examples of specific schools in which wellness of students was emphasized. The objective of wellness, could be interchanged with the goal of healing. What was not directly addressed by Dryfoos however, was nurturing of the spirit. As well, specific teaching approaches to help students become well were not discussed by the researcher.

A School for Healing

Kennedy and Morton (1999) are explicit in their belief in healing and its place in education, as explained in their book *A School for Healing: Alternative Strategies for Teaching At-Risk Students*. This school, the Center for Alternative Learning (CAL), served fifteen troubled youth in an integrated delivery system. The school's staff had a collective philosophy that each student they were working with had a right to be angry and that the student needed to heal emotionally. Healing was encouraged through a number of strategies, including the following:

1. Staff accepted students' beliefs that they had been wronged and that they were removed from previous schools because of injustice.
2. Staff had to believe the student was more a positive than a negative human being and had to behave toward him or her in ways consistent with those beliefs.
3. The emotional trauma the students were suffering had to be dealt with

before learning could take place.

4. Use of positive behavioral management, valuing of the child and the strengths of the child were focused on.
5. A loving environment was established.
6. Development of students' self-esteem and self efficacy was primary.
7. An extensive art therapy program was implemented.
8. Writing was used as a process to begin healing.
9. Counseling needs of students and their families were met (pp. 126-128).

These strategies, along with individual education plans for students, formed the approach for healing in this school. Kennedy and Morton spent time working at CAL, both as teachers and researchers. Morton, working as an art therapist, witnessed the success of the strategies and the school first hand.

The art therapy program was a cornerstone of the curriculum, an important tool to use in helping at-risk young people "understand their uniqueness and the special contributions they can make to society" (Kennedy & Morton, 1999, p. xi). Kennedy explained that she used art - poetry, drawing, writing, drama, pottery, painting or photography - to help youth connect to their emotions. When students became engaged in a creative process, they were enjoying a task and problem-solving, trusting that there would be help and support in a new venture for them. Art was also seen as a process of increasing their skill-building. The program's purposes were supported by Conte (2001)

who saw the arts as providing "healthy opportunities to internalize and apply critical social and emotional skills" (p.83). Conte (2001) claimed that making the arts central to education was an important part of nurturing students' inner lives.

Although not all students did well at this school, the researchers were surprised at the remarkable positive attitude changes, healing and growth the students exhibited. The researchers recommended that public schools embrace the strategies used at CAL, to significantly reduce the number of students being suspended and expelled. But they also recognized a need for schools of healing to serve the growing number of emotionally damaged youth. This model has emotional healing as its base, just one aspect of healing of self in an educational setting.

Balance and wellness of a person as an important element in education is addressed to different degrees by these groups of researchers and educators. Healing students as part of a teaching approach is also examined by Kennedy and Morton (1999) as well as Brendtro et al. (1992). Further discussion of what is involved in a healing approach to teaching at-risk students must take place to further develop the concept.

Healing as a Teaching Approach

What are the vital elements in working with at-risk students to help them to bring balance to their lives? Teaching and learning themselves, can be healing acts (Katz & St. Denis, 1991). Quality instruction and the positive attitude of the teacher are necessary. But within the teaching approach there are many strategies and attitudes which can

enhance the growth and healing of students, in the larger population and with at-risk students. While the literature on at-risk students identifies the population and recommends programs for their problems, research on fostering resiliency in children and youth explores how teachers and schools can create healthy environments for all students (Benard, 1993; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 2001)

Risk and Resiliency

Resiliency theory can be defined as the capacity to spring back or rebound and successfully adapt in the face of adversity and develop social, academic, and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Benard (1993) defined a resilient young person as one "who loves well, works well and plays well, and expects well" (p. 44) and possesses the four attributes of social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future.

Many people have these four attributes. Whether the attributes are strong enough to help the person spring back from adversity depends on whether protective factors exist in that person (Benard, 1993). Families, communities and schools that protect the young people growing up in them, are characterized by a caring environment, positive expectations and ongoing opportunities for participation (Benard).

Resiliency theory attempts "to coordinate the social, emotional, moral, physical, and cognitive development of young people" (Lantieri, 2001, p. 14) and to encourage viewing young people's lives from a strength-based perspective. This is in contrast to

social and behavioral sciences' problem-focused, hospital model for working with people at-risk (Krovetz, 1999). Resiliency theorists (Benard, 1993; Brown, D'Emidio-Caston & Benard, 2001; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 2001) went beyond the identification of risk factors such as poverty or chemical dependency to the study of how young people's strengths can be developed to protect them from harm. Resiliency theory has application for teachers of at-risk students.

Teachers must move beyond a focus on risk factors and problems in students' lives and create conditions to facilitate the healthy development of children (Benard, 1993). The school is a vital escape for a growing number of children and youth and "the level of caring and support within a school gives us powerful indicator of positive outcomes for youth" (p. 45). Fifty to eighty percent of at-risk students do succeed, especially if they are in a caring school environment that conveys high expectations (Benard, 1993; Krovetz, 1999; Werner & Smith, 2001). As well, participation in meaningful activities and roles, which can be designed in schools, helps students to lead more positive lives (Benard).

According to Benard (1993), Brown et al. (2001) and Krovetz (1999), educators must first see strengths in themselves, recognizing their own inner resiliency, before they can see strengths in students. This sentiment was echoed by Palmer (2001) in his work on teacher's inner lives. Palmer's description, "the undivided self - an integral state of being in which every major thread of one's life experience is honored, creating a weave of

coherence and strength" (p. 133) seemed to name the teacher as healer in different terms, of resiliency. Resiliency theory as practiced by teachers has the potential to nurture the lives of young people (Lantieri, 2001).

Showing Care

Teachers must genuinely care for their students and want to teach their students to be caring, competent, loving individuals (Noddings, 1992). Noddings argued that "the first job of schools is to care for our children" (p. xiv), although, as Noddings pointed out, many school people seem to insist the school's only purpose is to increase academic advancement. Emphasizing academics to the seventy percent of students who are not college bound, cheats those who are headed directly out of high school for the work force and sends the message that the school and society does not care for them (Noddings).

Noddings described how schools should function:

Of course schools should have academic goals and purposes. It should be expected that all students will find centers of care that will provide occupational and recreational interests, in addition to the personal and moral interests that are central in all lives. The school can also seek purposes that involve specific skills, desirable attitudes, and social interactions. (p. 66)

But the goals will not be met without attending to the needs of students for care.

Noddings asserted that the need for care in our culture is acute, especially for so many

adolescents who do not feel cared for or loved. When Noddings talked about the children and youth who are suicidal, pregnant, addicted, poor, violent and/or dangerous, she was referring to the at-risk population in our schools. All students must be cared for, but the need is even more desperate for the students who have few or no support systems outside of the school.

Noddings (1992) asserted that part of teacher's caring for students is recognizing their need for a spiritual life, similar to the writings of Arrien (1993), Brendtro et al. (1992), Katz and St. Denis (1991), Kessler (2001) and Lantieri (2001). "Possibly the greatest lack in modern public schooling is spirituality" (Nodding, 1992, p. 81). The spirit and the body are joined and the body and mind should not be addressed while ignoring the spirit (Noddings). In addition, Noddings described the longing for the spiritual connection as universal and essential to teaching about caring. The study of spirituality is part of the "maintenance, restoration and enrichment of spirit" (p. 84) and "a center of existential care" (p. 85).

Kohn (1998) argued that the role of the schools is to help children to grow into caring adults. The classroom is a logical place to guide children and youth toward empathizing with, caring about, and helping other people. Yet the encouragement of these social behaviors plays no part in most North American classrooms. The absence of these teachings, Kohn contended, stems from a lack of interest in the idea or an objection to teaching values in school. It has been said that morals and social skills should be

taught in the home. Educators would not disagree. Unfortunately, modeling of empathy and altruism, does not exist in all homes. Kohn explained that therefore, the classroom must be a place where students see empathetic and altruistic behaviors in their teachers. As well, students can be taught to interact cooperatively, instead of always competitively. The classroom must be a place of community, not punishment and reward, a place where students are responsible to one another so they can learn values, skills and caring along the way. Care as defined and discussed by Noddings (1992) and Kohn is a necessary part of healing as a teaching approach.

Nurturing Altruism

Teachers spend so much time helping at-risk students, that students form the impression they are powerless because they are so needy (Curwin, 1992, 1993). At-risk students may resist efforts to help them because the help makes them feel incompetent (Brendtro et al., 1992). For students with poor academic backgrounds and experiences, the classroom is a place where they feel useless and incompetent, yet it may be the only secure place they know. Curwin (1992) argued that teachers need to counter these feelings by giving students opportunities to feel both competent and useful. Students, just like anyone, need to feel they matter and they can make a difference. Giving students opportunities to be helpful can meet this need (Curwin, 1992, 1993). Helping others gives an authentic experience to students with immediate gratification for them. Opportunities exist in many places in a school for students to help others and programs and situations

may be created as well. Curwin (1992) noted there are certain characteristics of an opportunity that are most helpful: if it is genuine, involves tasks that match the ability of the student, is optional, is low key, does not reward negative behavior, is one of many possibilities, provides enough time for positive results and ensures that those being helped, welcome the help (pp. 91-93). Helping can bring feelings of power and worth to students, thus increasing their self-esteem (Brendtro et al., 1992; Curwin, 1992, 1993).

Building Self-Esteem

Building self-esteem is a goal in socializing all children and youth, including those who are at-risk (Brendtro et al., 1992). A young person without a sense of self worth or confidence lies prey to many social and learning problems. Coopersmith (as cited in Brendtro et al.) observed four components of self-esteem as follows: significance, competence, power and virtue.

Significance is found in the acceptance, attention, and attention of others. To lack significance is to be rejected, ignored, and not to belong. Competence develops as one masters the environment.

Success brings innate satisfaction and a sense of efficacy, while chronic failure stifles motivation. Power is shown in the ability to control one's behavior and gain the respect of others. Those lacking power feel helpless and without influence. Virtue is worthiness judged by values of one's culture and of significant

others. Without feelings of worthiness, life is not spiritually fulfilling. (p. 45)

Traditional Aboriginal educational practices addressed all of these four components of self-esteem. Significance was fostered in the culture that emphasized belonging. Competence was guaranteed by multiple chances for mastery. Power was developed by encouraging children to express themselves and virtue was reflected through generosity. Based on these four parts, Brendtro et al. (1992) developed a complex teaching strategy for reclaiming or healing youth at-risk.

Inspiring Hope

Hope is one of the most powerful human feelings; it moves people forward and is a critical influence in our lives. When hope is gone, so is the reason to try. Without hope, life can be intolerable. Hope is a vital, but often an absent element in student's lives, especially with the at-risk student (Curwin, 1992; Roset, 1999). Students at-risk come to school with little hope they will be welcomed or even noticed. They do not have hope that they will succeed in the academic assignments they are given to do (Curwin, 1992). Even if they have some days with success, their attitudes and expectations will not change significantly. They can escape the feelings of lost hope and pain by ceasing to care (Curwin).

Learning demands taking risks and to take risks, students must have hope. At-risk students are usually those who will not take risks academically (Curwin, 1992). They do

not want to risk doing what they are asked by teachers and schools because they have little or no hope for success. They may see other students being successful and think they should not be at school, among successful people. Without hope, there are no teaching strategies in existence that can help students to learn.

How can a teacher approach students to encourage hope in their lives? First, a climate in the classroom of safety for risk taking is essential. Maslow (as cited in Curwin, 1992) said the way to increase motivation is to decrease the danger and to enhance the attraction. If students are reluctant to risk becoming involved in the learning process, they need something to hope for. They must see that something can be gained by the risk, to make the possible pain worthwhile. Students need to overcome past failures by engaging in learning activities where they can feel a sense of competence. Experiences like work education programs give meaning and value to school subjects and show students how school can directly benefit them (Nutana Collegiate, 2000). Secondly, students must be able to predict a positive outcome from engaging in learning (Curwin). Teachers must therefore try to ensure the best conditions for success. This involves designing materials and assignments to meet the learning styles of individual students. It demands flexibility, innovation and knowledge on the part of the teacher. Opportunities must be given for creativity and expression of students (Curwin). As well, students must be welcomed into the school as human beings with the recognition that the factors that limit them academically, may also limit them socially, emotionally and spiritually. These students

need chances to learn about themselves and others, beyond the academic subjects and may need to be taught about the other aspects of the self. Students who are scared or devoid of hope need to enter a school everyday, where conditions are ripe for the creation of hope (Curwin). In a classroom of safety, students can take risks to learn and see that they can learn. With the hope for a positive future, students can be open to healing in any aspects of the self.

Teaching Strategies

Although healing pedagogy of many of the researchers has been described in previous paragraphs, two teaching strategies reoccur in the literature and are expanded on in the following paragraphs.

Healing Storytelling

Storytelling is the oldest and best teacher (Livo, 2001). It has healing powers too seldom recognized in today's world (Livo; Stone, 1996). According to Pinkola-Estes (1995), "stories that instruct, renew, and heal provide a vital nourishment to the psyche that cannot be obtained in any other way. . . . They provide all the vital instructions we need to live a useful, necessary, and unbounded life - a life of meaning" (p. 11).

Storytellers can provide the stories or people may offer up their own stories and in that way find meaning and healing (Stone).

Livo (2001) said that stories provide a way for people to connect. They allow the storyteller to say the truth and be heard. The listener can learn from the experiences of the

storyteller. Stories make us react emotionally and teach us the power of generosity, honesty and hard work, the value of trust and of keeping one's word. Stories have traditionally helped with mental, emotional and spiritual healing.

Stone (1996) asserted that hospital settings and other environments of healing should incorporate storytelling and other forms of art, such as dance and song. The more a story is considered, the more it can empower the body's own healing mechanisms. A tale can function as a guide, a model and a teacher to the listener. These proponents of storyteller argue a case for storytelling as a healing strategy for those in need.

Writing to Heal

Another teaching strategy used to seek healing is the use of creative writing exercises. One technique, designed by Stiffarm (1998) is called "spirit writing: writing circles as healing pedagogy" (p. 1). In this strategy, people in need of healing are encouraged to let go of their pain through a series of activities, beginning with a seated circle, relaxation exercises, then writing time, sharing of the writing, small group discussion, concluding with a round dance. Stiffarm described the strength of using this strategy:

It is through the story that we let go of pain. It is in letting go of the pain that we become free. It is in becoming free that we have choices.

It is in having choices that we are able to guide our own destiny. (p. 6)

With this technique, the leader or teacher facilitates healing, by inviting participants into

the activity. The leader therefore plays a role in healing and each member of the writing circle has a role in their own healing, just as storytelling allows for healing to begin.

Healing as a Process

Is there a set process students experience in healing when under the care of a teacher using a healing approach? Currently in the literature, there is no outline or explanation of steps or stages. This is not to claim that a process or progression does not exist. In areas other than education, phases or stages of healing have been outlined. Engel (2000) described seven stages of recovery for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. During recovery, survivors go through stages in the order necessary for their healing, experiencing "each stage in their own time" (p. 152). Kubler-Ross (1969) researched and worked out five stages of grief for those coping with their impending death. The stages of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance are often accompanied by hope. Again, individuals experience the stages as they need to, at their own pace, in their own order, although most people go through certain predictable phases during the process. Some people who do not reach the final stages have not coped with the death completely. In both sets of coping stages, there are individual variations. Such a set of stages or steps has not yet been researched and reported to account for healing experienced by students. Although students may turn their lives around, by, for example facing their problems, starting to attend school regularly, succeeding in classes and even graduating, the combinations of wounds to be healed are as varied as each student.

Palmer (2000) suggested that healing, “embracing one’s wholeness” (p.71) is as individual a journey as one can make. Saulis (as cited in Durst, 2000) echoed this statement in, “Each person’s journey of healing is unique. Each person must find his/her own balance” (p. 54). Therefore, based on the literature, there are no set stages or steps in the process of healing for at-risk students.

Healing as a Deficit Model

In opposition to the basic tenets of healing as a teaching approach, Kronick (1997) argued that the approach of healing used with at-risk students is a deficit model and should be avoided. Kronick stated, what is important to remember “when working with at-risk students is that they have problems in living although they are not sick and in need of healing . . . we are working with people who have problems in living, not people who are problems” (p. 9). By moving away from the deficit model of understanding human behavior, and by assuming the students have strengths, some of the barriers that prevent at-risk students from seeking help will be removed. In addition to this assertion, Kronick said, “the person should be worked with as a total person” (p. 12) and a sense of respect and care should always be communicated. Here, Kronick seems to argue that students need to be worked with holistically, but should not be recognized as in need of finding balance or as incomplete. Instead, only the student’s strengths should be built upon and recognized as valid.

Conceptual Framework

Arrien's (1993) Way of the Healer was used as a conceptual framework to analyze and organize the data gathered on the teacher participant's interactions and relationship building strategies with students. The framework is based upon common perspectives of indigenous people around the world. The strongest healing force for all human beings is the power of love. Love is shown through "acknowledgment, gratitude and validation" (p. 49). Certain ways of showing love characterize each of the three extensions of acknowledgment, gratitude, and validation. Acknowledgment of the skills, character, appearance and impact of others is the first way of extending love. Expressing gratitude for the presence and talents of others and accepting their gratitude is the second way of extending love. Validation by accepting others and seeing them as whole beings is the third way of extending love. The power of love as a healing force and the way it was extended was used to frame the interactions of the teacher participant.

Summary

Although there have not been studies done on healing approaches in education per se, current literature exists on healing beliefs, schools and practices. The at-risk student profile illustrated a segment of the school population in need of healing. Cross-discipline definitions of healing were explored to give depth to the concept. The healer as an archetype, according to Arrien (1993) was explored. An explanation of the role of circle in healing as practiced by the Plain's Cree provided background for the writing of

Brendtro et al. (1992), Graveline (1998), Katz and St. Denis (1991), and Regnier (1995).

Two school models, the full-service community school (Dryfoos, 2000) and the Center for Alternative Learning (Kennedy & Morton, 1999) stress wellness for all school people, with the latter focused on emotional healing for students. Models or philosophies do not necessarily ensure a healing approach however. Conditions and practices established by individual teachers create learning environments conducive to healing. Dealing with students from a strength-based perspective, showing care, nurturing altruism, building self-esteem and inspiring hope in students helps to create a climate where relationships can flourish, healing can begin and learning can take place. The two dominant recurring teaching strategies in the literature to encourage healing - storytelling and creative writing - were explained. Healing as a process was investigated, with no discovery of standard steps in the journey. The theme running throughout the literature was one of teachers as facilitators in the healing process. Those who need to find balance have the inner ability to heal, but can be helped by a significant adult, a teacher, to find their way. What is lacking in the literature is a cross-cultural model of a healing approach in education as well as a comprehensive collection of practical strategies to facilitate healing for students. Perhaps looking at one teacher's approach will serve to inform others of possibilities for working with at-risk students.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, the type of inquiry, context of the case study, and the method of data collection, analysis and referencing system are presented. Because the background and subjectivity of the researcher are influences on all aspects of this study, they are discussed. Finally, the ethical considerations for the undertaking of the study are outlined as a conclusion to the chapter.

Nature of the Inquiry

This was a qualitative case study, “an intensive, holistic description and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 27). The case study, according to Creswell (1998), explores a bounded system or case over time “through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). It focuses on the bounded system under natural conditions, usually, so as to understand that habitat (Stake, 1988, p. 256). Once a case has been identified, the researcher should proceed, first of all, with an extensive collection of data through interviews, observations - direct and participant - and documents, to gather information about the case (Creswell). The data collection should take place over an prolonged period of time (Merriam, 1988). The analysis of these data can be holistic - of the entire case, or embedded - of a specific aspect of the case (Creswell). From the data collection, a thorough, rich description of the case should

appear from which an analysis of themes and an interpretation of the case can be done by the investigator (Creswell, 1998). The analysis should be “rich in the context of the case or setting in which the case presents itself” (p. 63). Then the researcher will narrate the study, including major events and a detailed look at a few incidents.

Case study is “an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (Merriam, 1988, p. 2). A descriptive case study is appropriate to study an area in education “where little research has been conducted” (Merriam, 1998, p.38) such as this thesis’ research focus and it is the most appropriate choice for this study. “[A]nchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insight and illuminates meanings that expand its reader’s experience” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). This method has worked well for studying innovative programs and practice in education for program evaluation and policy informing (Merriam, 1998). Research “focused on discovery, insight and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p. 3).

Therefore, the case study method was chosen to examine one teacher’s approach to working with students. The study aimed to discover how this teacher’s beliefs and values underpin her approach. It also examined what she did in her classroom and the school to try and help students, how she treated students and how she dealt with them on a daily basis. Through an examination of this teacher’s practices and beliefs, the

researcher aimed to answer: In what ways did the teacher participant use a healing approach to teaching?

Context of the Case

The study took place in a small urban Saskatchewan collegiate comprised of grades 9-12. The school was an integrated school-linked services site, designated as a Community School by Saskatchewan Learning. It drew students from all parts of the city. The average age of students in the collegiate was 18 years. Over 80% of the students were at risk of not completing high school and has already attended two or more other high schools. Almost half the students were clients of Social Services. One quarter of the population had been involved two or more times with the criminal justice system. About 40% claimed an addiction to alcohol and or drugs. Approximately 25 % were student parents. As well, many students lived without parents or guardians.

The Integrated School-Linked Services model involved many support agencies. There were two full time social workers, two student parent workers, an addictions counselor, two nurses, two youth and community development workers, a Stay-in-School program coordinator and a daycare for 17 infants and toddlers on site. Support was seen through case management, counseling, anger management courses, parenting courses for teens and parents of teens, family mediation, cultural awareness clubs and youth facilitator training programs

A teacher facilitation team integrated career development for grades nine to

twelve, including such courses as Community and Career Exploration, Youth Internship Programs: Tourism, Agribusiness, Construction and Fine Arts and mentoring partnerships with businesses. There was also a Bridging to Employment course that recent graduates enrolled in for the summer. By providing practical and realistic career education and experience, at-risk students could potentially see the worth of education and gain some real world experience working with others in the community.

The teacher participant was selected based on her superior reputation of working with at-risk students. She was held in high regard by students, staff, administrators and consultants and spoken about with admiration and respect. As a former colleague, the researcher had heard her present at workshops and speak about students and teaching strategies, therefore was aware of her dedication and apparent skill in working with challenging students. The researcher was also aware of the teacher participant's experience with Aboriginal practices. The teacher agreed to participate in the study and it was arranged that the researcher observe her grade ten and eleven English Language Arts classes.

Data Collection

Data were collected in the form of semi-structured interviews, participant observation and document analysis (Gall et al., 1996; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Reflections on the study, its process and the researcher's discoveries were recorded daily after classroom observations, in a handwritten journal. These four methods of gathering

data were used to ensure the results were consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 1998). The research was done over a period of five weeks from May 6, 2002 to June 5, 2002.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews proceeded as follows:

1. a one and a half hour interview, semi-structured - a mix of more and less structured questions (Merriam, 1998) was done before the site visits commenced, to reveal the teacher participant's initial thoughts on her teaching approach;
2. a one hour interview was conducted three weeks into the study to address questions arising from the first interview and from classroom observations;
3. a third interview was done at the end of the site visits for the posing of final questions by the researcher and the teacher participant. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed;
4. short, spontaneous interviews were also used as needed.

Classroom Participant Observation and Document Analysis

The methods of interview, observation and document analysis served to triangulate the data (Gall, et al., 1996) collected in the interviews. The split page verbatim method was used to record observations in the classroom, so that evidence, through

specific examples of the teacher's approach, could be realized. Classroom observations and reflections comprised the researcher's field notes. (See Appendix D) Documents for analysis included course outlines, student writing and assignment handouts.

Data Analysis

Organizing, analyzing and synthesizing the data was guided primarily by the strategies of Bogdan and Biklen and Huberman and Miles (both as cited in Creswell, 1998), McMillian and Schumacher (1997), and Patton (2002).

Initial organization of the data occurred as field notes were written in longhand, reflective comments and questions recorded in a journal and audio tapes of interviews made and reviewed. As a participant observer, the researcher began reflecting on events as they occurred and began to identify emerging themes; this is called "interim analysis" (McMillian & Schumacher, 1997, p. 507). Audiotapes and field notes were transcribed into word processed form and coded by date. Next, all information was read through to "get a sense of the whole" (Patton, 2002, p. 440). The analytic strategy of sketching ideas was done by jotting down ideas in the margins of the text (Creswell, 1998). The researcher followed Creswell's suggestion of writing out the findings in the form of memos and summaries of field notes. Feedback was obtained from the teacher participant on the summaries. Categories by which to group data were then developed, based on the research purpose and questions.

Patton (2002) described the close look at the data as one of inductive analysis,

searching for themes, patterns and categories to emerge, also known as “open coding” (p. 453). This was done by clustering margin comments into themes and taken a step further by linking the themes with verbatim example. This began the process of reducing the data. By this point, as Patton suggested, the researcher had reflected deeply enough on the experience to feel “grounded” or immersed in the data. The researcher was then able to organize and write a description of the case, as guided by Creswell (1998). Arrien’s (1993) *Way of the Healer* was used as a conceptual framework for the data gathered on the teacher participant’s interactions and relationship building strategies with students.

Data Referencing System

References made in the thesis to field notes uses the following format: (FN 02/05025). FN represents an entry in the researcher’s field notes, followed by the year, month and day of the entry. Field notes are comprised of observations made in the classroom, direct quotations from the teacher participant, spontaneous interviews and the researcher’s comments. Excerpts from transcripts of the semi-structured interviews, are indicated as follows: (IN # 1 02/05/08), the IN denoting the interview excerpt, followed by the interview number, and then the year, month and day the interview was conducted. Reflections and questions on the observations from a reflective journal are denoted by JL, followed by the year, month and day of the reflection.

Researcher's Background

In any qualitative study, the researcher's subjectivity must be recognized and stated outright rather than viewed as "the prototypical orphan in the cinders. . . something to live with, avoid, and never, never be caught consorting with" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 104). This subjectivity permeates any study from the beginning. As Glesne and Peshkin said:

My subjectivity is the basis for the story I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person and as a researcher. From the selection of topic clear through to the emphases I make in my writing. Seen as virtuous, subjectivity is something to capitalize on rather than to exorcise. (p. 104)

This subjectivity is spoken to here.

I have loved being a classroom teacher for the last eleven years. The majority of my experience has been working with high school students, ages 13 to 56 years, 80% of them considered at-risk. Most of these years were spent in an urban school that gradually introduced other human service professionals into the building. Over the past nine years, the school became an integrated, school-linked services site. It is there my beliefs about teaching approaches that work best with at-risk students were formed and practiced. My commitment to student-centred education in a transformational, holistic approach has grown from a philosophy held since beginning teacher days, through experience, and

from observing my colleagues and students. The work done with students to help them find balance and success is described and examined in this study as a healing approach.

I try to acknowledge and honour each student as a person with a precious soul, deserving of respect and love. Students who have known a great deal of pain are often unaware of their assets, but can be guided to draw on their strengths. They must find balance in their lives or at least some stability, to be successful in their education. I set high standards for my students and myself.

I believe that students who do not have some balance and control in their lives, cannot do well in school. In the best case scenario, the immediate needs of students should be addressed at the same time they are attending classes. I cannot expect students to succeed when their basic needs, like housing or nutrition are not met. Students may have survival needs satisfied, but be in emotional or spiritual turmoil and unable to concentrate on classes. Teachers can recognize the unique circumstances and needs of at-risk students, but their biggest challenge is accessing programs and services. Schools are often places that are at-risk of failing students. I am a strong advocate of the integrated, school-linked services school model for those students requiring human services on a regular basis. But the most vital element in schools is healthy, positive relationships between teachers and students; students must know and feel that teachers care. When relationships are in place and teachers have a connection with individual students, they may begin to guide them on the journey of healing.

I came to this study having learned and practiced ideas of other cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. I do not speak of the beliefs or teachings of any spiritual leaders, researchers, Aboriginal groups or psychologists as my own; but instead, I give my respect and thanks to those who recorded their learning and beliefs about healing and the teacher as a healer for others' benefit. I have tried to illustrate that healing is not exclusive to Aboriginal cultures or medical practice or therapy or a single school. It can be practiced by those who address students as humans of worth, with the strength and ability to heal themselves.

My goal is to help students graduate from high school. Having education as a priority in their lives is an asset to their well-being. The best I can wish for them is health and happiness of the mind, the body, and the spirit.

Ethical Considerations

Application for approval of research was sought and received from the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Committee. Upon receiving approval, letters of intent were sent to the Director of the school division, the collegiate's principal and the teacher participant. The letters explained the nature of the research and included some information about the use of a healing approach by teachers working with students. The teacher was invited to participate, making her a volunteer.

To safeguard confidentiality and offer assurances, I offered the teacher participant

an ethics agreement about all data collected in the study. She was able to withdraw freely at any time from the study, taking the data collected to that time. While the data were being analyzed and written about, the teacher was able to view and comment on the transcripts and prose written up as reports. Only the sections of information to be used in writing the thesis were included in the reports. She had the chance to correct any errors in my interpretation of the data and add any of her comments. We both carefully monitored the content of the writing to ensure no details revealing her identity were included.

Interview tapes will be kept in confidential storage at the University of Saskatchewan for five years after the completion of the study. At that time they will be destroyed in accordance with University regulations. All notes and transcripts will also be destroyed at that time. A copy of the ethics agreement used is in Appendix A.

CHAPTER FOUR

Introduction

This descriptive study presents one teacher's approach to teaching at-risk students who attended an integrated school-linked services school. The study addressed specifically, in what ways the teacher participant practiced a healing approach to teaching. Strategies and approaches she used to assist students to heal, employed through interactions and relationships were observed. The study sought to address these areas, as well as to increase understanding about healing and its potential for use in public education. The first section of the following four-part discussion describes the context within which Sarah taught so the reader may better understand and contextualize the data. The second section reveals how Sarah interacted and formed relationships with students. Arrien's (1993) theory on the Way of the Healer is used as a framework for the data in this section. The third section describes a variety of teaching strategies employed by the teacher participant. Finally, the fourth section discusses Sarah's beliefs and values which guide her practices with students.

Context

Sarah taught at Lands Collegiate (pseudonym) in an older residential neighbourhood. A soccer and baseball field flanked one side of the large brick building, the rests of the grounds were covered with towering trees and lawns. Each morning, this place steeped in traditions of times long past, opened its doors to a crowd of diverse

students and staff from all parts of the city.

The wide halls of the collegiate were quiet and nearly empty before classes, until ten minutes before the start of first period. Then they were filled with friendly chatter between students and staff alike, which created a welcoming, relaxed feel to the place.

Sarah's classroom was tucked away at the end of a hallway, part of one of many additions to the school. Her room was a large rectangle, windowless and low ceilinged, the walls filled with posters and student art and projects. On a side blackboard was a large drawing in coloured chalk - red, yellow and white - of the Brendtro et al. (1992) model, the Circle of Courage. Hanging at various points in the room were dreamcatchers, paintings of cave art and hide paintings left behind by former art students. On the front board was the daily quotation, a tidbit of some life truth or lesson for the students to observe, such as "What happens IN you is more important than what happens TO you" or "A success is a failure with a fresh coat of paint." The desks were in short rows, facing toward the long front wall and Sarah's desk, but were readily moved into clusters for group work or a large circle for stories or talking circles. The back and sides of the room were flanked by cupboards of books and art supplies and high tables where English Language Arts students could spread out to work on posters, collages or storybooks. Soft music from a radio played in the background.

It was in the back corner at a table that I made my observations of the teaching practices of Sarah. I was welcomed to the class as someone who needed a bit of space to

work. This premise was used as the students were not the object of the data collection and neither the teacher participant nor I wished to disturb the students in any way.

Similar scenes played out before classes each day. A few students arrived early and were greeted individually by Sarah. Students moved into the classroom and greeted each other. Sarah visited and joked with them or inquired about their well being if they had been absent, showing concern for their health and their progress in classes. As the bell went, Sarah moved to the front of the room and greeted students as a group, outlined the activities and objectives for the day and encouraged everyone to use their time wisely. Each class started with a similar induction.

The Way of the Healer

Sarah's patient and gentle way with students was a pleasure to observe as well as inspiring. The vital elements of a healing approach to teaching as presented in the literature review were evident in Sarah's work with students. Arrien's (1993) model of the Way of the Healer aptly describes Sarah's way of working with students, without exception and therefore is used as the framework for this section.

Power of Love

The power of love is recognized in all major traditions as the most potent healing force available (Arrien, 1993). This power was foremost in Sarah's responses when speaking about working with at-risk students, although none of the interview questions addressed this topic, directly or indirectly. This seemed to indicate the importance to

Sarah of loving and showing care.

You know, I love the honesty of the kids and I love them; they are survivors. They have proven that they can handle life's problems and they can come out and be tough and still have a heart. That's the beautiful thing. I don't think I have met a kid that has shut down the world or has shut down love. They all feel love, they feel hope, regardless of what's happened to them. I just have such respect for that kind of person. And I think more of us that are in the teaching profession should put ourselves in their shoes and experience what they have and be where they are today.

(IN #1 02/05/08)

Sarah also spoke of the importance of students seeing that teachers care about them and how the care may affect students.

All kids have to know you like them. That's really important to them and if they are problem kids and they feel liked and cared about, they'll come a long way. I also feel that working with at-risk students we can do more. We are not just educators to them and hopefully we can make them appreciate themselves more. You can't learn unless someone cares about you. If you're there and you're feeling as though you're being picked on or are out of place, you are not going to learn. (IN #1 02/05/08)

Sarah often verbalizes the care as well, from warm greetings to each student who arrives

before the bell, to kind words offered to a student who had been absent, "Hello; how are you? I missed you on Friday. Are you okay? Did your sister find you?" (FN 02/05/13) If she shows she cares about their whereabouts and remembers important details about their lives, Sarah believed students will feel welcome to return after an absence. She explained that because so many of her students live on their own and do not seem to take proper care of themselves, she often encourages them to seek medical care. Sarah was very direct with students and admitted she feels a bit like their mother sometimes. To a very ill-looking student she said with great concern, "Oh! How are you? You look so ill! Did you go to the doctor yet? Your eyes look awful. Will you promise me you'll go today after school?" (FN 02/05/13). And to confirm that valid absences due to illness would not cause assignments to be penalized, Sarah explained to the class,

If you're sick, you don't get marks off. Absolutely not! If there's a problem, come and see me. I want you to do as well as you can. The late mark policy is just for people who are warming a desk. You've seen these people. We don't have any of those in here though. We have a great bunch! And remember, I don't want you to fall behind. Come see me. (FN 02/05/13)

One of Sarah's stories about a student who decided to accept her offer of help involved the power of love and its force upon this particularly challenging student.

I'm remembering a student. She must be finishing her first degree now.

She wore dog collars, black make-up. When she first came to our school she happened to be in my room. She came so far that girl, but at first - boy did she look angry! She just sat there and she wouldn't work and boy - talk about at-risk students. All weekend I worried, "How am I going to deal with this?" and I came to one conclusion, because she was there, her attendance was good, she did no work and she was angry. And I thought, "What can I do? I just don't know." Then, I came to one conclusion - I could love her. And I thought I would just have to love her lots and I just get really funny about that. Anyway, when she would sit there not working she would expect me to give her heck and I would just walk around the classroom and I would just touch her on the shoulder and say, "Are you okay?" She would kind of look at me and glare and then another time I said something like, "You know I am so glad you're here and if you don't feel like working and something's bothering you, I don't mind; it's okay. It's just nice that you are here with us." And then she would give me this look, like - "Where are you from?" She started to work that day. It took about two weeks and she became one of the best students - and, oh, her writing was beautiful! (IN #3 02/06/25)

By using intuition and paying attention to what had meaning for the student, Sarah used caring to reach her and had the student draw on her own strengths and talents to succeed.

So much of how Sarah shows care is projected through her manner. She speaks gently, interspersing her talking with little laughs, and is smiling most of the time. She moves among her students, chatting, touching them on the shoulder and speaking very softly when inquiring about more personal matters. This first day showed me that Sarah's non-verbal cues and voice modulation are strong factors in the way she deals with students.

It seems very obvious she cares about these kids. (JL 02/05/13)

As well, it was obvious in the way Sarah talked about students, how much she cared for and respected them. She inquired of a student about former students, "How is John? He is well? How is his brother, Ken? He is a lovely, beautiful soul. He wasn't doing so well for a while. He was one of the sweetest students" (FN 02/05/13). Sarah's interactions with and comments about students seem to indicate the healing force of love at work in her classroom.

The Way of the Healer is to "extend the arms of love and through acknowledgment, gratitude and validation" (Arrien, 1993, p. 49) to help others to believe in themselves and their talents. Sarah's practices in extending love encompass these three approaches. Her practice of showing love through acknowledgment will be presented first. The reader may wish to note that the vital elements in a healing approach to teaching as outlined in the literature review are an integral part of the discussion here.

Acknowledgment. Students' skills, character qualities, impact and presence were

all acknowledged by Sarah. When initially meeting classes, Sarah said she works to establish rapport. She recognized that students are generally nervous on the first day of class and most will not remember much about rules and details. She wanted to get to know her students as quickly as possible and for them to “meet [their] best friend in this room” (IN #1 02/05/08). She said of first days,

On the first day I am always excited but I am also nervous too because that’s the first day I am on display when I talk to them. I think that the most success that I’ve seen is definitely spending time talking to them a little about who I am and about what my approach is and basics of honesty and respect. The other things fall into place. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

Sarah said she has used this approach on the first day because it seemed like the natural thing to do. Rapport with students is not something that can be taught to student teachers or to students. It is intuitive, Sarah believed. She also had students write an introductory journal page and she responded in writing for handing back to them the next day. “You make them feel good about being where they are - it works” (IN #1 02/05/08) she said. Once initial rapport is established, she went on to acknowledge her students during the time they spend together.

She used praise of student skills generously but sincerely, especially when speaking one-on-one with students during class. She praised their writing, work habits, who they are individually, “I’m glad you are finding it comfortable in the school. Anyone

would like to have you in their class. You are a very special person” (FN 02/05/14) and as a class, “Your responses are wonderful. You are putting a lot of thought and time into these responses to the novel. I am impressed” (FN 02/05/20); “I do things for you and do them because you deserve it. I do it because you are special” (FN 02/05/13) and to a particular student, “You have great discipline. You do what you have to do. I realize you are a very smart girl. But, you need to slow down and proofread. . . . When you move along in this world of English, these little hints will help you” (FN 02/05/30) These types of comments are probably not uncommon in the average classroom; however, for students who have not met with success in school, this type of praise acknowledges students’ skills and effort.

Also part of acknowledging students is recognizing their resiliency. Sarah points out students’ resiliency by focusing on what students have done and can do despite their struggles in life thus far; she teaches students that struggles are experiences from which to learn.

We’re all powerful but we measure it by the wrong things in life. If bad things happen you can use them for building blocks instead of a ‘poor me’ attitude. I think you can do that in little baby steps and help students to see their strengths. (IN # 3 02/06/25)

Resiliency was recognized for individuals by Sarah’s references to past successes and future possibilities for students. Even the smallest “baby steps” were pointed out.

“Yesterday you worked so well all through class. You can do that again today and get those questions done” (FN 02/05/13) and “When I taught you in grade ten, I still remember how well you did. Your poetry is so good. Can you see yourself doing that well again? I can.” (FN 02/05/16) and “What’s this ‘good enough’? I hate that expression. This work is not your best. I want the best from you!” (FN 02/05/16). The researcher reflected, after witnessing these type of interactions, that recognizing student strengths seems to be closely tied to the self-fulfilling prophecy, a successful strategy in education. (FN 02/05/16) By focusing on students’ strengths and teaching students that they can rise above their experiences, students may come to realize their potential.

Another vitally important strategy to acknowledge students is simply listening; it is a strategy that Sarah feels is often lost in a large, busy classroom, but one she is able to employ with the low student/teacher ratio that is present throughout the school.

Listening. Always listening and caring about and accepting what they say.

It’s pretty simple, but I think there is nothing more important. You listen to your own kids. They all need to be listened to with an open mind, not a judgmental one. It’s so simple, but it’s not something that a lot of people realize. Often I think people are too busy giving lectures or getting into their own lives or relating it to something that has nothing to do with the kids. Some students - it’s the hormones and the time of their life and ego is big and the Id, and they really don’t care about anything but their

problems and their life and about what's happening to them. And that's

fair. They need to have you focus on them, listen to them. (IN # 1 02/05/

08)

Students do not always choose the most convenient or appropriate times to declare their need for attention. Near the end of one class, during a discussion, a student broke down and declared a drug and alcohol addiction to Sarah and his peers. Sarah turned her focus to the student, recognizing his need for her attention and dealt with the situation directly. She asked him, "Can you see something better for yourself [student's name]? Can you remember when things seemed better? You know something, you should see [addictions counselor's name]. Can you see yourself changing for you and your family and your future children?" (FN 02/05/15). As the bell went, Sarah and the student left to see if the addictions counselor was available. By listening and responding to the boy's blatant call for help, Sarah showed respect and care for the student, as well as making a referral to the counselor which could begin healing of the student's addictions. The researcher later mulled over Sarah's response to this student,

I wonder how I would have handled that situation. I probably would have hushed him up and tried to deal with it later. At first I thought he was joking because his statement was blunt. It almost didn't seem real. Sarah was so direct and focused. She seemed to know he needed to be listened to at that moment. (JL 02/05/15)

Students were acknowledged in Sarah's classroom by her listening, recognizing resiliency, praising sincerely and building rapport. These approaches allowed her to let each person know he or she was "a precious individual" (IN # 2 02/05/31) with skills, unique appearance and qualities, who had an impact on his or her surroundings.

Gratitude. Another way that love is extended in the Way of the Healer according to Arrien (1993) is by showing gratitude. Sarah spoke numerous times about appreciating her students' honesty when dealing with her. She showed gratitude to her students for their straight-forward, no-holds-barred attitudes and openness, sometimes with a direct statement, such as, "Thank you for telling me the truth. Now you need to focus on finishing your assignment" (FN 02/05/15). She also showed her gratitude for their honesty by reciprocity, "the ability to equally give and receive and the ability to connect" (Arrien, 1993, p. 53). Sarah offered in return for their honesty, her own honesty, as well as the opportunity to connect with her and form a relationship. To a student whom she had not seen for two weeks, she offered quietly, but firmly, "The game is over. You're either here or you're not. You're a good writer and can do this class. You owe it to yourself to get this credit" (FN 02/05/14). The principle of reciprocity involves healing, as one is able to both grow and receive, in this case, show gratitude and experience gratitude and hopefully find a balance between the two.

Validation. In the Way of the Healer, Sarah also shows love through validating and accepting students for who they are by addressing the whole individual, not just the

mental or academic needs of the student. Beyond academics with the student, Sarah said,

[Teachers] have to think of students' emotional part, their being, which is so precious, really. Why would I come down hard on someone when I know they are emotionally hurting that day? So, when I know someone is acting out and not working, instead of ragging on them I generally go and touch them and ask, 'Are you okay?' and 99 percent of the time they will tell me that something has happened; so you've seen their mental state, their emotional state. Instead of them physically acting out they settle down. But they've shared that their spirit is troubled and I can work on getting them some help if they need it.

All these areas are connected. (IN #1 02/05/08)

Sometimes the spirit of students seems to be the focus of lessons. She is concerned about the number of students she sees who seem empty in spirit. "I am always reminded in our society how corrupt we are - in spirit. We value money and 'stuff.' It bothers me that kids are so empty. They are missing out. The Circle reminds us that all four quadrants are important" (IN # 2 02/05/31). Sarah told this story to students after a hearing about material items they wanted and felt they needed,

When I went to the Honduras, I saw such poverty and yet I saw people with beautiful spirits and such wonderful love for their families. I think we have become very materialistic and we are not looking for the

spiritual aspects. I don't mean that in a religious sense, but we need to

be grateful for simple things and work to nurture those simple things.

And, you know, it was only after coming back from spending a month of

seeing such poverty that I felt so humble. I just couldn't get it out of my

mind. Made me a better person. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

Sarah shared how she learned from her experience and communicated a significant

lesson at the same time. She stressed to students that there are many other things to value,

like being happy with oneself and loving one's family.

Sarah recognized that within the resilient youth may be a person full of pain who

has a lack of control. But as part of the validation of students' feelings, she added, "If a

person is acting out, they are usually hurting or scared. But they have to know what is

acceptable and what is not acceptable. They need guidelines and I give them structure in

the classroom" (IN # 2 02/05/31).

Sarah runs a tight ship. She is definitely not a pushover, even though she

is soft-spoken and gentle. The students seem to work hard in her class-

room and I was surprised to see how quickly she gets after them if they

are not on task. It certainly is a quiet place, but a good place to get things

done. The structure seems to work well. (JL 02/05/14)

Sometimes the students appear to be in so much pain, mentally and emotionally

that school work seems impossible to deal with. When dealing with students in this state,

Sarah had this to say,

Very often in teaching I think the academic 'stuff' isn't as important as where their mental state is. I mean there's no sense in teaching them the ABC's if they have such big hurts inside that need to be addressed. It's interesting you know. It's asked about the little kids in elementary school, maybe in a high poverty area, 'How can they work without food?' But how can teens work when those problems are weighing heavily upon them?

It's the same thing. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

Students' feelings need to be validated by the teacher. But, there are many students who hide what they are feeling and their pain is manifested in other ways. Sarah did not deny or ignore that some students can be very difficult to deal with initially. This presents yet another type of challenge for the classroom teacher.

Sometimes they'll come in acting so tough and they are difficult to deal with. But they are a child inside with a soul in a glass box. [Pause.]

There is no formula for this job. There is something though, remembering that everybody comes from somewhere before they enter the classroom. I don't know what has happened to them last week or last night. Something horrible may have happened to them. We have to be so careful in how we deal with students. (FN 02/05/14)

These words summarize the respect Sarah used when validating the feelings and

experiences of her students.

During the researcher's observations, Sarah extended love to her students in the Way of the Healer by acknowledgment, gratitude and validation. She acknowledged the skills, character qualities, appearance and impact of her students. She also showed gratitude for their presence and validated them by accepting who they are. By extending professional love to her students and connecting with them by forming relationships, Sarah is following the Healer's way, according to Arrien (1993). Her actions and words provided an atmosphere of care in which various teaching strategies were used.

Teaching Strategies for Healing

Classroom observations of and interviews with Sarah revealed the teaching strategies she used, which are communicated gently to students, with respect and care. Strategies such as storytelling, writing and art therapy which were discussed in the literature review as healing pedagogy were practiced by the teacher participant. As well, additional strategies used by Sarah are described in this section.

Storytelling

Nearly every lesson contained at least one anecdote by Sarah which explained concepts, ideas, human nature or answered student questions. Sarah has strong beliefs about teaching with stories to help students understand the world and themselves.

It's important for people to know that everyone has stories. Their stories are valuable and stories help us. We read stories. Why? Not just for the

reading - not just for the assignment because we try and choose stories that relate to their life. . . . I also think it's important for kids to know that you're human and if you can tell a story that shows that you have shared a similar experience or something like that then they're more comfortable. Life is about learning and how better to do it than through stories? Elders always use stories, and when I was little, I used to visit this one old Aboriginal lady and she never criticized me but she always had a story that I would have to think about. And, then I would think- oh! that's what she meant - mmm okay. It's a good way to teach kids - like kids would hear about Peter and the Wolf and learn about faking it. Kids learn through fables from the time they are little and fairy tales, don't they? So why would we be any different when we are older?

(IN #3 02/06/25)

Sarah's stories too, did not teach directly about just one concept, but rather were subtle tales given to students to ponder and take away what they would. She told stories about growing up in the North, about her grandparents, teaching experiences, traveling around the world and her favourite topic, her family - especially her grandchildren. When her students were making children's books and a student was being particularly hard on her own lack of artistic ability, Sarah told her, " When I draw with my grandchildren and my drawings are not so great, like dogs or horses, but they know what they are, they like

them. That's what kid's books are about, kids liking them and learning something from them" (FN 02/05/17) This short anecdote offered instruction and an example of what was valued by the teacher.

In fact, most answers Sarah gave to interview questions were in the form of stories about students she has taught. She is a self-confessed storyteller who sees stories in everything and is reminded of stories every time she meets someone. Sarah uses this ability with students to relate and connect with them and to teach them that they are not alone.

Writing

Use of journalling and creative writing are two strategies Sarah has found can help at-risk students in a variety of ways. Although initially journals can be met with suspicion by students, that a teacher wants to pry into their personal lives, Sarah is prepared for this reaction and uses it as a teaching opportunity.

At the beginning, I just explain the differences we have in writing. For example, writing a business letter would be somewhat different than writing a letter to a friend and writing in a journal. That's just for one person to look at, and is again, a different style of writing. I think also it is important for young people to be heard and if they complain the first time and as soon as you write them back and realize that you don't just say "Fine" but you respond and agree or say, "Gee, that's a different

way of looking at something,” then all of a sudden it becomes important to them and for at-risk students, it’s great for them. Sometimes they will walk in my room and say “Where’s my journal?!” They need to talk and they know you are going to listen and they will trust you; at least they trust me. They know I am not going to go gossiping about it. If there is something in the journal I am worried about, then I arrange to talk with them and ask them if they would like to talk to someone else and often-times they do. (IN #3 02/06/25)

Although responding to the journals is demanding, Sarah explained that she makes time to respond in writing to student concerns, questions, thoughts, opinions and complaints because students “often time need a sounding board” and “they are also aware of the fact that maybe an adult’s perspective is a good thing” (IN #3 02/06/25). Writing back in journals is just one more way to offer help.

Creative writing is used by Sarah in all of her English Language Arts classes as a strategy to give students a creative outlet and an opportunity to give voice to their ideas. Sometimes students choose to make their writing public which can further build their self-esteem through acknowledgment of their written accomplishments. Sarah explained why creative writing is a conscious choice from the curriculum,

The best thing about creative writing is that it reinforces strengths of students. . . . The other thing about creative writing is that everyone tells

stories, right? We tell stories about dreams, we tell stories about something funny that happened at the grocery store; we're always telling stories. That's how we talk. But then, when kids are doing it in written form they don't think they have anything to say, but then I think we have to talk about their conversations. I had one person last time who just didn't want to do any activity. So I said, "Write your life story, you can do that." Gosh, did he get into that. He worked all weekend on it. A kid who didn't want to do anything in this area. He wrote and typed ten pages. The other thing is that if it is your own experiences, you want the spelling to be right. It is the best writing tool because because people care. You know, "This is my experience. I want it to be written in a way that people will appreciate it or understand it." That's a good thing. (IN #3 02/06/25)

Sarah also related another experience with a creative writing class project that seemed to be cathartic for one student in particular and a proud accomplishment for the class as a whole.

When we did the creative writing and that class was a big class and stayed big until the end and they were so needy, oh my God. So, when we did the novel I put them in groups and I put a strong person as a sort of the mentor for reading and they really connected. When they did creative writing they put their work together and did this little booklet. You know

I remember standing there looking at this some thirty kids who had been so needy and I could have walked out of that room and been gone an hour and they wouldn't have known I was gone because they had connected so well and had taken the writing so seriously. They had to submit three pieces to our publisher and [student name] handed in a piece about her being a heroin addict and you know it was just, ooh, something else. I read it and I said, "Do you want to put that in our book that everyone's going to read?" and she put a look of defensiveness on for a minute and she said, "It's true!" . . . Doing that writing had an effect on those kids and for [student name] especially. (IN #3 02/06/25)

Sarah's approach to using writing and publishing is in line with her practices in choosing assignments that students can relate to and that give students many options. When doing a novel study with the grade eleven class, the students chose as a class, the methods to go through the novel, from options Sarah provided. The final decision came down to a vote (FN 02/05/17). The researcher found this to be an interesting strategy.

Any of the choices to study the novel would accomplish Sarah's goals; perhaps giving them choices and having them vote would make them feel more cohesive as a class, thereby accomplishing another goal? They could feel they had some decision-making power and could choose what suited them best. (JL 02/05/17)

After reviewing several assignment handouts and noting assignments given in class, without exception, assignments with a wide variety of choices allowed these grade ten and eleven students to work from their experience, interests and opinions, thereby showing respect and giving validation to their lives. (See Appendix D) The research and essay assignments gave suggestions for topics of concern to young people, such as street kids, driving, relationships, suicide, and music, but allowed for individual choice. The topics encouraged students to vent, to dream and to argue. In respect to class assignments in this subject area, Sarah felt, "English is the one area that we can work on all those communication skills and also make them aware of life around them and maybe even in some indirect way come to grips with with their own problems" (IN #1 02/05/08).

At-risk students who have not been able to see how school connects with their lives and who may claim they dislike school and teachers will find a difference in Sarah's classroom. Sarah observed, "Healing entails so many things whether it's healing your hatred of school, healing your hatred of teachers, healing - perhaps we're always just healing about something, all of us" (IN #3 02/06/25).

Art Therapy

Another strategy used by Sarah to help students heal is shown in the art therapy sessions she and two counselors run at noon hour. It gave her the opportunity to reach students who were not necessarily in her classes as the sessions were extra-curricular. She wished to continue offering the class because of the perceived benefits for the students.

Art therapy is great for at-risk student because - art is great. Art is therapy and you know that, and I think it's great because so seldom we get the opportunity to express who we are. We're always compared, we're always judged and it's usually based on others' experiences. Art is about who you are and it's not graded in the way that an English or math assignment is. It also gives you an opportunity to really think about who you are. I don't think in today's society we spend enough time thinking about who we are and what's precious to us, and I have to go back to what I was saying about the spiritual. I think that our society is lacking spiritual connections and art is an opportunity to get in touch with that spiritual side of ourselves, and it's an opportunity to cry and to laugh and to accept. It's a great thing. I see it all the time and not only teaching students. It gives us voice. . . It's like this kid who appears tough and maybe acts out a little bit but inside there is a soul wanting to be heard - and art therapy does that. It's a release of pain and a sharing of joy and an acceptance of yourself. The whole world should have milk and cookies and art therapy.

And that's for healthy people too. (IN #3 02/06/25)

Just as in the classroom, Sarah worked in art therapy sessions to build connections with students by recognizing they have needs beyond their mental or intellectual selves as served by academics.

Building and Accessing Community

One of Sarah's goals was to have students comfortable with each other and to have classmates become friends, or at a minimum, respectful of each other. "School is a social thing too. I love to see when a class melds together" (IN #2 02/05/31). She stresses the Circle of Courage theory of Brendtro et al. (1992) with her classes.

The Circle is an affirmation of my own beliefs of the importance of recognizing the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health of our students. In using the Circle, there is hope for everyone. Belonging in the classroom is so important. Students need to feel like part of the group. This is a first step toward their feeling good about school. The Mastery is of skills. The academics are so important. They must get their education. Generosity is shown by kindness. I think that I show them kindness and they need to be kind to each other. Independence is them working on their own when they need to. This is just a start to the Circle, but it's the basics. All the parts work together and it works so much better when they feel like they are part of a group and are friends.

(IN # 2 02/05/31)

Sarah tried to have students see their classmates as a group and compared them to family, such as this closing comment after a class talk on sibling rivalry, "We just had a good family discussion" (FN 02/05/31). She also explained a benefit of being in a group, "If

you participate in the class you will not only learn, but will feel part of the class and not get bored and look at the clock. [Laughter]" (FN 02/05/14). She reminded them to celebrate the fact they spend time together, "It's a beautiful day. It's sunny. Let's be happy about the two hours we spend together" (FN 02/05/15). She saw most classes coming together after the first two weeks of a term.

There have been a few students who take a while to trust Sarah and do not buy into the community concept of the classroom. But usually, these people come to accept what Sarah has to offer; she described this acceptance as "a type of healing" (IN #3 02/06/25).

Sometimes you get a tough guy or someone who's got a real chip on their shoulder and you just keep being the same and do what you do, and then all of a sudden one day that guy walks in, (it's usually guys, sometimes girls though), and he looks at you with different eyes and he's almost embarrassed to look at you. He's really happy to be there, and you know when I see that look I feel all teary because I think something has happened here, some barriers are down or he's glad to be here or something has happened in his life that has changed things. I think that happens in many classrooms in our school. (IN #3 02/06/25)

Sarah concluded that these students become part of the fabric of the classroom and seem to welcome becoming part of the group. However, when students need more help than

what can be offered in the classroom, as is often the case with at-risk students, Sarah strives to introduce students to the helping professionals in the larger school community.

Holistic approach. Sarah spoke about her belief in a holistic approach to working with students. The nature of the approach - that mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of each student are recognized as valid and addressed - make it nearly impossible to be accomplished by one teacher. However, because of the setting in which Sarah worked, barriers to learning and success for students could be addressed beyond that of a conventional classroom and school. A core philosophy of the school is that academic success depends on the health of all four areas of the person. Access to services such as on-site addiction counseling, a healthy mother/healthy baby public health nurse program, a daycare, social workers, an elder mentoring program, the student parenting program, as well as personal, academic and career counseling enabled Sarah and other teachers at the collegiate to help students through referrals. Accessing the services allowed for the addressing of multiple areas in which students need healing.

Referrals. Sarah works to build the idea that others in the school community can be excellent resources and advocates for students. She described her contact with other services and staff in the school community, as “constant, to keep on the pulse of the school and students’ lives” (IN #2 02/05/31). When students show they need the help of human service personnel, such as a guidance counselor, social worker, nurse or addictions counselor, Sarah has strategies to encourage students to meet with these

professionals, although trusting yet another person can be very difficult for the students.

I don't mind saying to students, "Look, I wish I were an expert in this area.

I wish I was a person that could help you and talk to you, but I know

someone who is so knowledgeable and educated in this area and they have

access to all the right sources. And, if I can trust this person, I know you can

too. Just give it a chance." And they do. I don't try to be a counselor. I'm

not. That's not my gift. I can listen but I don't have the skills, but the

people in our building do, and they are wonderful. Oh, every day I am so

grateful that we have those people that I can access. Then, I always check

with [students] when they come back and ask if I was right. And they say,

"Yeah, yeah, they were good." But [students] have to trust you that you're

not going to send them to someone that won't help them. (IN #1 02/05/08)

However, Sarah recognizes that sometimes students have trouble recognizing or

admitting areas they need to work on. If they can see a counselor as a person worthy of

their trust, it is easier for students to decide to talk with her or him.

The most difficult person to get them to see would be an addictions

worker. You know they will see the social worker, they will see other

people, but they don't really want to talk to [the addictions counselor].

That's the most difficult one, yet she [addictions counselor] is the

busiest. A good ploy I've come across this last little while, is if I see

a student who I think needs one particular worker and I've talked to them about getting some kind of help by talking to someone - and they'll talk to me but they won't talk to someone else - I'll arrange for that worker to come into my classroom and talk about a topic. I'll find something we have been discussing and tie it in. So [the student] can see this person is approachable (IN #1 02/05/08)

By adapting curricula, Sarah uses it as a vehicle of intervention and prevention. She also follows up with students, encouraging them to seek help. In this way, Sarah familiarizes students with human service workers and further builds community, beyond the classroom, and at the same time, accesses services for students.

Life Lessons

Although Sarah is a strong proponent of learning and healing through stories, writing and art therapy, this does not mean she misses opportunities to sprinkle words of advice about how students should act as human beings in communities outside the classroom, such as within their own families and society in general. This technique which I labeled "giving life lessons" is a direct teaching method used daily by Sarah, but one of which she was unaware she practiced. "One is not aware of what you say or how you do things. So I talk about life?" (IN #1 02/05/08) Using class discussion, questions and sometimes conflicts, Sarah takes opportunity to talk to students about ways to be, such as in this example:

It is so important that we take care of children. Who will look after kids if we don't? If parents don't take care of the kids, then society must take care of them. In the whole world there is nothing more precious than children. We must all be monitors for our brothers and sisters.

(FN 02/05/21)

Sarah also made comments such as, "That's a beautiful thing about us, we have different backgrounds, different experiences; you are all experts in some areas" (FN 02/05/14); "Did you know that when you are 15 you can become an alcoholic three times as fast as a 25 year old? The damage done is three times as much, too" (FN 02.05/17); "Never buy a lottery ticket when you need food or something else, thinking it will get you out of debt" (FN 02/05/22); "You can never have too much compassion in life. It is easy to criticize others when we don't know or understand them. That's why we must try to have a better understanding of mankind" (FN 02/05/14) and to a grade 10 student,

If you quit school now to get a job, you will still be working at the same kind of job in 10 years; not a very good job to pay for a house, a car, kids.

People need to have money just to have fun. You need to have a job that will provide other things for you like clothes and going out, not just the bare necessities. (FN 02/05/15)

When a student complained about a long bus trip he had to take, she suggested, "On any given day when you wake up and don't feel too happy, look for something good to

happen and it will. You will need to look for it. Why don't you take along your journal or sketch paper? (FN 02/05/31)

And when there was a problem among some students Sarah said,

We talk about respect and kindness here. Talk about a lack of respect.

I feel a streak of meanness in the room today. Why? Why the anger? If you are angry with school or with me, then you must talk to me. Don't misdirect your anger and hurt another student. This lack of respect to one of your peers is very disappointing. (FN 02/05/30)

Sarah manages to deliver these messages in a way that does not appear to be lecturing or nagging, but instead, she seems to be giving hints and sharing her life experience as it applies to topics that come up in class. She continually works to nurture altruism in the students. All of her work seems to result in an atmosphere of calmness, safety, and cooperation in the classroom, mixed with good humour, comfort and the occasional debate over issues or opinions.

Sarah's choice of teaching practices, with emphasis on the importance of communication, of everyone's stories, of writing skills, of seeking help to heal, and of community were abundantly clear upon classroom observation and congruent with the way she interacts and forms relationships with students. Her choices are based on what she believes best serves her students. Sarah's beliefs and values which guide her interactions with students and practices in teaching will be discussed in the final section.

Beliefs and Values

The beliefs and values that guide Sarah's work with at-risk students are those that guide her life. Her beliefs in hope, honesty, and respect are presented here in the context of her valuing students as important human beings.

Sarah recognizes the importance of hope for her students and for all people.

"Hope is so important to these kids. Sometimes that little bit of hope is all they seem to have. Hope to pass a class, hope to do better. It keeps them going. Without hope, what do they have? What do any of us have?" (IN # 3 02/06/25) Sarah's belief in the vitality of hope echoes the emphases of Curwin (1993) and Roset (1999).

Dealing honestly and openly with students is something Sarah maintains is necessary for her survival in the classroom. Students return her honesty with their own.

When I screw up, I get told. And I'm happy when they [students] do that. When I make a mistake, when I do something that is not quite kosher, I don't mind being told. Let's say I don't feel well or don't feel I'm being fair or in a good mood, I can tell them and they'll understand. They understand that kind of thing and boy, that's nice. You know, it allows me to be the person I am because I'm not phony and I don't play games. And so, these kids relate to that and maybe I belong. Maybe that's what it is. They accept me for who I am because I'm honest with them. And they are honest with me. I am who I am and I accept other people

for the very same thing. I can't stand phoniness! I like that about the kids; they are not phony. I think life does that to you when you've had some hard knocks and these kids have had them early. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

Even for those students who are more challenging to deal with and are not honest with her initially, Sarah has a theory,

Sooner or later, maybe they've played the game longer than some people but it always comes to a head. I've never known a kid that ultimately, I didn't get to know him - or her. If they're with you long enough, you'll know them because they can't play; it's too much work and if you're not a pretentious person and not playing games with them, something clicks and they think, you know this person's okay. (IN # 3 02/06/25)

Honesty seems to be an integral part of how Sarah deals with her students.

Sarah also spoke about her belief in respect as the basis for how she deals with all people, in and outside the classroom.

You can never judge someone because they are a different culture or they have different values. I don't care what culture it is or where they came from. Respect is the one value that should be and is shared by all cultures and by all families regardless of financial attributes. That is the one common denominator you can have in a class and in a society. That's what I believe so strongly. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

This belief manifests itself in the classroom because “kids will never respect you unless you respect them, that’s for sure” (IN # 1 02/05/08) and Sarah explains her beliefs immediately upon meeting a class for the first time.

Thirty-five grade eleven students and I don’t know anyone. I mention school policies and everything. But I always emphasize that need for respect for others, for themselves, for me, and to expect it from me too.

I also try and show that it’s a different power struggle. I’m not here to control anyone, I’m here to help. (IN # 1 02/05/08)

Sarah demonstrates respect for students in a variety of ways; one way is by setting a positive example for them. “I think that role modeling is important and you’d better walk the way you talk, because they’ll know. Right?” (IN #1 02/05/08). She spoke of teachers modeling the behaviors they wish to see in their students. “You’ve got to be yourself and show values you believe in . . . You are up there being judged. You’re on display and everything you do will be monitored. So, you’ve got to be yourself and show values that you believe in” (IN # 1 02/05/08). Demonstrating respect with these students is especially necessary. “Honestly, you have to respect people and particularly these young people because some of them haven’t had a lot of respect. I think a lot of the anger they have is because of lack of respect” (IN # 1 02/05/08). Sarah’s strong belief in the need for respect in the classroom is reflected in all of her work with students, while she deals with them honestly and nurtures their hopes for the future.

Summary

This study examined one teacher's practices and beliefs in working with at-risk students. The investigation aimed to discover if the interactions, teaching strategies, beliefs and values of this teacher bore similarities to a healing approach to teaching as described in the literature review. Arrien's (1993) Way of the Healer was used as a framework for data analysis of the teacher's interactions with students. The power of love as the most potent healing force was the basis of this teacher's holistic approach to working with students. Love and care was shown in a multitude of ways, guiding all interactions with students as the teacher strove to guide and help heal students, mentally, physically, emotionally and/or spiritually. Various teaching strategies to enhance learning and healing were observed. A climate of safety and community was built and emphasized in the classroom. Human service personnel working in the collegiate were accessed by the teacher participant to assist students and were viewed as a valuable asset by the teacher. Hope, honesty and respect were the most vital beliefs of the teacher to model and hold for her students. Thus, the data collection revealed that many of the teacher participant's practices were similar to a healing approach as revealed in the literature and her strongest beliefs and values echo the bases of theories involving healing and teaching.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

In this final chapter, the research study is reviewed from its beginning stage, through the data collection stage, arriving at a summary of the findings. There is also reflection on the findings and some concluding comments on further study.

Summary of the Study

This section summarizes the study from inception to its framework, and its methodology and design.

Impetus for the Study

After teaching at-risk students for eleven years, the researcher wished to study the holistic approach to addressing student needs. The researcher considered: If teachers helped students to improve themselves - mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually - could improvement in students be described as healing? What would this practice look like in the classroom? Had similar studies been done on healing in the classroom? This launched the researcher into a search of the literature on healing approaches in teaching and a desire to study one teacher in particular to answer the primary research question: In what ways did this teacher practice a healing approach to teaching?

Conceptual Framework

Arrien's (1993) Way of the Healer was used as a conceptual framework to

analyze and organize the data on the teacher participant's interactions and relationship forming strategies with students. The framework is based upon the power of love as the strongest healing force for all human beings. Love is shown through acknowledging, validating and showing gratitude to others.

Methodology and Design

The methodology used in this study falls within the naturalistic or qualitative paradigm, with the use of the case study, specifically. The qualitative method allowed the researcher to observe the natural teaching conditions of the teacher participant. It also allowed the researcher to understand and interpret the practices and insights of the teacher participant, on site, during interviews and later, upon reflection of the researcher.

The study was delimited to a single teacher participant, chosen for her superior reputation of working with at-risk students. The study took place in an urban Saskatchewan high school during five weeks in May and June of 2002 and was conducted by one researcher. The methods used to collect that data were semi-structured interview, classroom observation and document analysis. Use of these methods served to triangulate the data. A reflective journal was also kept by the researcher. Data analysis was done inductively, through a search and discovery of themes in all written records, whereupon data were reduced, organized and a description of the case written.

Research Findings

This section summarizes the findings of this study. Each subsection refers to one

aspect of the research questions: interactions and relationships, teaching strategies, and beliefs and values, then a discussion in conclusion. This is followed by implications of the research.

Interactions and Relationships

Most apparent in Sarah's dealing with students was her showing of care and extending of love. The frequency with which she spoke of her love for the students indicated it is an essential part of her approach. Showing care manifested itself in a number of ways in her classroom and seemed to result in the forming of relationships between teacher and students. Sarah acknowledged students as individuals with unique skills, qualities, and presence and praised them, as a class and individually, when appropriate. She acknowledged students' resiliency and thus their resources to heal themselves, with some guidance. Part of showing care was also done by listening to students' stories and concerns and appreciating their honesty with her. Sarah accepted students for who they were and always kept in mind they were under her care, not just as academic students, but as whole people with emotional, spiritual and physical needs. Sometimes, needs other than the academic must be addressed in order for students to be able to stay in school and be successful. Sarah validated the students by recognizing these other needs. These interactions went beyond simply good teaching to facilitating opportunities for students to heal.

Sarah's teaching came from the heart; by loving and caring for her students, she

encouraged them to care and to feel part of the community. Showing care was seen as a necessary part of teaching by Kohn (1998) and Nodding (1992) to help students grow into caring adults. And not only is the power of love recognized as the most prominent factor in healing by Arrien (1993), but also by Katz and St. Denis (1991) in their model of teacher as healer. Sarah's actions and words seemed to fit perfectly into the present frameworks developed in the literature on one who nurtures healing in others through love and caring and the development of professional relationships with students.

Teaching Strategies

Healing pedagogy as revealed in the literature included storytelling, writing, and art therapy. As an English Language Arts and Art teacher, Sarah saw these three methods as strong tools for encouraging healing in students. As a storyteller herself, Sarah understood the importance of telling and listening to stories. Everyone has their stories and the telling of the stories can be an impetus for healing. Sometimes stories can be told by students through journals, poetry or short stories. Writing allows students to have a voice and to receive feedback. It validates their experiences and can help them to release pain. Sarah also gave students freedom by allowing them their choice of topics in creative writing assignments. Another way Sarah reached students was through art therapy sessions. She saw art as therapy and believed the sessions can be cathartic for students. These sessions were an additional way for her to connect with students beyond their academic needs.

hope, honesty and respect. Hope was vital to the survival of the students. Honesty was necessary to form and maintain relationships with her students. Allowing students to be perfectly honest, sometimes puts Sarah in a vulnerable position. Not only did she become privy to sensitive information, she also heard from students if she made a mistake.

However, this was part of Sarah's strategy. She allowed herself to admit vulnerability and to show that she is not "in the business of being in power" (FN 02/05/30). This attitude corresponds precisely to Katz and St. Denis' (1991) model: "The 'teacher as healer' stresses her own vulnerability, rather than having to be in control. . . Vulnerability is at the core of the healing process; it is not just as an expression of illness but a necessary element of health" (p. 30). Sarah said that she was always learning about herself and from her students. She continued to develop her knowledge and her status as a teacher. Finally, respect is evident all of Sarah's work. She respected students, the school community, herself and her profession, and modeled respect as a requirement for the classroom and for life. In turn, she earned the respect of students and the community as she was deserving of it. Again, this echoed the words of Katz and St. Denis, "respect characterizes all phases of the work of the 'teacher as healer'" (p. 30). The essential elements of Sarah's practice seem to be outlined in the teacher as healer model developed by Katz and St. Denis.

Conclusions

From the research data, it is apparent that the teacher participant practiced a

healing approach to teaching, according to the parameters in the extant literature, as discovered through the case study method. The research showed that the love expressed by Sarah in her interactions and relationships with students was consistent with the factors identified in Arrien's (1993) *Way of the Healer* through each of acknowledgment, gratitude and validation. This framework was based on shamanic traditions, but the archetype of Healer "is universal and available to all humankind, regardless of context, culture, structure and practice" (p. 8) but not attainable by all. The Healer's way was attained by Sarah; she worked with people "out of love, not out of competition" (p. 9) and taught from the heart (Palmer, 2001). Sarah listened to her students, was grateful for their honesty, accepted them and respected them. Sarah's extending of love also echoed the work of Nodding (1992) and Kohn (1998) on showing care as a necessary part of teaching.

Sarah's acknowledgment of student resiliency has strong support in the literature on strategies for working with at-risk youth from a strength-based perspective (Benard, 1993; Lantieri, 2001; Werner & Smith, 2001). Sarah could see strength in herself, which is necessary to first acknowledge, before seeing it in students (Benard) and before becoming a healer to others (Graveline, 1998). As well, she recognized her own vulnerability and needs as a person, another precursor to following the way of a healer (Arrien, 1993; Graveline, 1998; Katz & St. Denis, 1991).

Sarah strove to make her classroom a place of learning and healing. Her teaching

strategies of storytelling, writing, and art therapy were the primary strategies discovered in the literature to facilitate healing (Graveline, 1998; Livo, 2001; Stiffarm, 1998; Kennedy & Morton, 1999). This combination of strategies was used in Sarah's classroom because of her own interests and talents - she is a storyteller, a writer and a professional artist. It was fascinating to discover this direct correspondence between theory and practice, and then to realize that Sarah practiced the ways of healer because of inclination, resulting from her unique character, beliefs, experiences, and talents.

An integral part of Sarah's approach was accessing of human service resources available in the collegiate. Having these resources at her disposal had a definite impact on her practice of a healing approach. Schools which were designed with attention to healing, such as the Circle of Courage schools (Brendtro, et al., 1992), Joe Duquette High School (Regnier, 1995) and the Center for Alternative Learning (Kennedy & Morton, 1995) also had multiple resources for teachers to access for students and for students to access for themselves. These schools enabled teachers to address needs of the student beyond academic concerns as they were based on a holistic approach, similar to Sarah's teaching approach and her collegiate's philosophy. It is questionable whether or not a teacher would be able to practice a healing approach with today's at-risk students without the resources provided in these types of schools. This gives credence to the necessity for a teacher who is interested in using a healing approach to have immediate access to human service personnel.

As well, through Sarah's use of on-site resources, she helped to build a sense of community beyond the classroom and into the school for her students. They could come to know other staff as facilitators to healing and perhaps see the staff as part of a larger community of support. Community building which establishes a place to facilitate healing resonated with the teachings of the Sacred Circle (Saulis, as cited in Durst, 2000) upon which both the Circle of Courage schools and Joe Duquette High School are based. It is no coincidence that Sarah's healing approach bears similarities to practices in the Circle of Courage schools as she is an advocate of the Brendtro et al. theory of reclaiming youth, with the building of community as an important component of the model.

Her belief in honesty and respect was central to how she dealt with students and vital to a healing approach as discussed by Arrien (1993) and Katz and St. Denis (1991). Her teaching experience influenced how she worked with students, as past experiences do for most teachers. But her way of working with young people seems encompassed by everything she is as a teacher and a person because she works from her heart - with courage, intuition, and commitment. How does a researcher measure or account for such a source, the heart, "that involves the total person as he or she functions in his or her deepest essence"? (Katz & St. Denis, 1991). The researcher hopes that the case study method has done justice to describing Sarah's approach.

Implications for Practice

The following implications have been suggested in four areas - teacher practice,

teacher placement, professional development, and teacher training - based on the findings of this study.

First of all, in the area of teacher practice, the healing approach involves having a professional love for students. This love is demonstrated in a variety of ways and is centred on hope, honesty, and respect. A healing teacher holds a holistic concept of educating students at the core of practice. A teacher realizes a healing approach not by appointment or university classes, but by background, experience, personality and beliefs, making such a teacher unique in his or her approach to healing. In order to practice a healing approach to teaching, a teacher must believe in and recognize the resiliency of at-risk youth and their ability to heal themselves, given some guidance. Without this belief, the teacher cannot act as a facilitator to healing. Such a teacher must employ a variety of teaching strategies to reach a diverse student population, after establishing a climate of safety and community in a classroom.

Secondly, an integrated school-linked services school or community school is an ideal placement for a teacher who practices a healing approach because of the presence of at-risk students and the ability to make referrals to on-site services. With the current thrust of school reform to community school designations, along with the increase in the at-risk student population, teachers who practice similar healing approaches could be actively recruited to work with at-risk youth in similar settings.

Thirdly, as at-risk students are present in all school buildings, all teachers may

benefit from learning about a healing approach to teaching, through professional development workshops led by teachers practicing a healing approach. Workshop participants could see what they are already doing to help heal students and gain new insights about healing approaches which could be incorporated into their own practices.

And lastly, as college of education students cannot necessarily be selected or trained to care for students or serve their communities with a healing approach through specialized curriculum, instructors need to communicate this attitude through their own teaching and character.

Recommendations for Further Study

After reflection on literature review and the findings themselves, the researcher is convinced that more study in this particular area of education is needed. The healing approach seems to be formed by many personal influences and therefore, there must be many kinds of approaches in existence. Further study could identify and explore many individuals and compare their methods. This could be a useful exercise, enabling other researchers to compile a collection of strategies for healing at-risk students or to develop a model of a healing approach to teaching, both of which were beyond the scope of this study. But perhaps, before more study is done on approaches, the effect of the approach on students should be examined. How healing manifests itself in students - such as in attendance, achievement, attitude and health in various facets - could be the subject of an intriguing and worthwhile study. The question about the desirability of placing teachers

intriguing and worthwhile study. The question about the desirability of placing teachers who practice a healing approach into mainstream classrooms and schools could be asked as well. New understandings could come from further study of a healing approach that seems to have its roots in the world's oldest traditions.

Concluding Comments

This study, which explored the experience of one individual who practices a healing approach to teaching, may be the first of its kind. The intrinsic value of this case study lies in meeting one teacher and learning from her ways. The implications for teacher practice with at-risk students are far-reaching. Given the current rise in at-risk student population and what the increase reflects about society, schools need teachers who are healers. We would do well to remember Sarah's words about all young people, "Each one of them is a precious person. We must not see 'faults', like shyness, as bad things. We must look a little deeper. Each person has a gift. Maybe they don't know it yet, but they do." (IN # 2 02/05/31)

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APPENDIX A

Ethics - Application , Approval and Agreement

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROTOCOL

To

University of Saskatchewan

Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research

1. Researcher: Roberta Boire, Graduate Student
Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

Supervisor: Dr. Larry Sackney
Educational Administration
University of Saskatchewan

1b. Research Phase: May 6, 2002 to June 14, 2002

2. Title of Study: A Healing Approach to Teaching

3. Abstract:

Healing in education is both an ancient and an emerging idea. Approaching students as whole beings with a need for balance and health of their mental, emotional, spiritual and physical selves is not a common teaching practice in Western educational systems, but one which appears to have some success and demands further research.

Teaching at-risk students is challenging and requires innovative approaches to deal with the students' multiple needs. The nature of the at-risk student is one of lack of balance in their selves. How can a teacher work with students and guide them toward balance or healing in their lives?

The proposed study will examine one teacher's approach to working with students and her thoughts on helping students to heal as part of her approach. It will document her practices and beliefs about teaching at-risk students, exploring her interactions and strategies used with these students. The study seeks to address these areas as well as to increase understanding about healing and its potential for use in public education.

4. Funding: Not applicable

5. Participant: I have contacted the teacher I wish to have as the subject of this case study. She has unofficially agreed to participate in the study. This teacher is a former colleague of mine.

6. Consent: See "Ethics Contract with Teacher Participant", "Letter of Intent - School Division" and Letter of Intent - Principal" attached.

Although some students under the age of 18 will be present during classroom observations, they will not be interviewed or otherwise asked to provide information or feedback to the study. Students at the intended site are average age of

18.5 years. Many live on their own, without parents or guardians.

7. Methods/Procedures: This qualitative case study will involve three semi-structured interviews with the teacher participant, (See "Semi-Structured Interview Protocol" attached), participant observation and document analysis of course outlines and assignments.
8. Storage of Data: At the end of the study, all study results and associated material, including tape recordings, interview transcripts and observation notes will be safeguarded at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years. At that time, the tape recordings will be erased and the observation notes and interview transcripts will be destroyed. If the participant withdraws from the study, the tapes, transcripts and observations will be destroyed.
9. Dissemination of Results: The results of the study will be published in a thesis and may also be used for publication in scholarly journals or for conference presentations.
10. Risk or Deception: No aspects of the study will involve risk or deception.
11. Confidentiality: The confidentiality and anonymity of the participant and the site will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. Although the results of the study will be published, at all times the names of the participant and the school will remain anonymous.
12. Data/Transcript Release: The teacher participant will be informed in the Ethics Contract that she owns the information I collect from her. If at any time she wants any or all information deleted from the study, I will do so immediately by deleting tape recordings and destroying all notes and transcripts. She will be asked to read the case study information to make changes to ensure accuracy and your anonymity. With any disagreement over interpretation, her version will be used in the study. She will be given the opportunity to review the final transcript and be requested to sign a transcript release form. (See "Transcript Release Form" attached.)
13. Debriefing and Feedback: Sharing and discussion of the information gathered can take place throughout the research phase as requested by the teacher participant. All transcripts will be made available to the participant and a copy of the theses will be given to her upon her request.

14. Signatures:

Researcher, Roberta Boire

Date

Supervisor and Department Head
Dr. Larry Sackney, Educational Administration

Date**15. Contact Name and Information:**

Roberta Boire
Phone: 955-0058
Email: campbell.r@sk.sympatico.ca
218 Bronson Way
Saskatoon, SK S7J 5E2



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

NAME: Larry E. Sackney, Educational Administration
Roberta Boire

BSC: 02-443

DATE: 08-May-2002

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Science Research Ethics Board has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "A Healing Approach to Teaching" (02-443).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed study should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for five years on the condition that a status report form is submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date.

I wish you a successful and informative study.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Thompson", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Valerie Thompson, Chair
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Ethics Agreement with Teacher Participant

STUDY TITLE: A HEALING APPROACH TO TEACHING: A CASE STUDY

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

I am interested in your approach to teaching students, which is described in the literature as a holistic approach or healing approach to teaching. I would like to learn about the specific teaching strategies used in your classroom. I would like to discover why you teach and deal with students the way you do. What are your beliefs about your teaching approach and how have you come to have those beliefs?

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY:

While there is no guarantee of the benefits of the study, I anticipate that any knowledge gained will have real potential for the improvement of teaching practice.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The research will be in the form of a case study. Data collection will run for four to five weeks. I propose to observe you in the morning and afternoon classes during that time. The study will take place during May and June of 2002.

The study would involve:

1. A preliminary interview that would take about 1-1/2 hours.
2. A 10 minute session before each class I would observe, during which time you could tell me your plans for the class.
3. A short (10-15 minute) debriefing 3-4 times a week at which time you could respond to and amend my field notes to ensure an accurate portrayal of your teaching approach.
4. Post observation interviews (two of them, one hour each) to clarify the accuracy of observations and interpretations. You would have the opportunity to add or delete information.
5. I would appreciate access to some documents, such as class outlines or assignments and tests which have not been completed by students, might add to the data.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I realize it asks you to commit extra time in the school day. I believe this will give you the opportunity to reflect on your teaching and maybe gain new insights. I am looking forward to spending time in your classroom and learning from you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me, Roberta Boire, at home - 955-0058 or my advisor, Dr. Larry Sackney, at work - 966-7626.

Please review the following points. They pertain to the conditions of your participation in the study and how you and your interests will be safeguarded.

1. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.
2. There is no foreseeable risk or deception involved in your participation in this study.

3. All information gathered will be held in the strictest confidence. Every effort will be made to safeguard your anonymity. You will remain anonymous unless you choose otherwise at the conclusion of the study. Only the researcher will have access to your identity. Any records or files will refer to you by a fictitious name.
4. It is possible, however, that your status as a well-known teacher in your school system may result in your identity being realized by readers of the study. The steps put in place to protect your identity may not be sufficient.
5. Only information relevant to the study will be collected. If at any time you want any or all information deleted from the study, I will do so immediately by deleting tape recordings and destroying all notes and transcriptions. You may withdraw the data from the study at any time up until the thesis becomes public, at which point you no longer have control over the data.
6. You will be asked to read the case study information to make changes to ensure accuracy and your anonymity. With any disagreement over interpretation, your version will be used in the study.
7. At the end of the study, all study results and associated material, including tape recordings, interview transcripts and observation notes will be safeguarded at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years. This procedure is in accordance with the guidelines set by the Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research at the University of Saskatchewan. At that time, the tape recordings will be erased and the observation notes and interview transcripts will be destroyed. The description/analysis of the information will remain as a permanent record of the study.
8. The results of the study will be published in a thesis and may also be used for publication in scholarly journals or for conference presentations. You will receive a summary of the research findings at the end of the study and a copy of the thesis if you request it.
9. I will advise you if any new information bearing on your decision to continue in the study arises.
10. This research project was reviewed and approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science on May 8, 2002.

Thank you for considering this proposal. I realize it asks you to commit extra time in the school day. I believe participation in this study will give you the opportunity to reflect on your teaching and perhaps gain new insights. I am looking forward to spending time in your classroom and learning from you. If you have any questions with regard to the study or to your rights as a participant in this research study, please contact me, Roberta Boire, at home at 955-0058, my advisor, Dr. Larry Sackney at work, 966-7626, or the Office of Research Services, University of Saskatchewan at 966-4053.

I have and understood these points and we agree to follow them. I have received a copy of this contract for my own files.

Professor Larry Sackney
University of Saskatchewan, Educational Administration

Date

Ms. Roberta Boire
Graduate Student, University of Saskatchewan
Educational Administration
Telephone: (306) 955-0058 (home)

Date

Teacher Participant (Signature)

(Printed name)

Date

APPENDIX B

Letters of Intent/Consent

Letter of Intent - School Division

May _____, 2002

Dear _____;

Please consider this letter as my official request to use _____
School as a site for my thesis research.

My thesis topic is a healing approach to teaching as practised by a particular teacher. The literature discusses a healing approach, but provides few examples of healing teaching in action. I am interested in discovering what strategies are used by this teacher to begin and to enhance healing of at-risk student. I also wish to find out what beliefs about teaching inform her strategies.

At-risk students can be our most challenging of the student population and successful strategies to meet the needs of this growing group of students must be constantly sought. My study will examine how one teacher works with these students in an alternative way, using a healing approach, which recognizes and addresses students' mental, emotional, spiritual and physical needs.

My research will consist of a study of a single case, that of an exemplary high school teacher. Data will be collected in the form of semi-structured interviews with the teacher, participant observation of only the teacher in her classroom and analysis of the strategies and assignments (not completed by students) she employs.

Every effort will be made to safeguard the anonymity of the teacher. It is possible, however, because of this individual's status as a well-known teacher in the school system, that readers of the study may realize her identity. The steps put in place to protect the teacher's identity may not be sufficient.

I feel that the knowledge I will obtain from the study will be of future benefit to the teachers and students in the division.

If you have any questions, please call my advisor, Dr. Larry Sackney at 966-7626 or me, at 955-0058.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Roberta Boire

Letter of Intent - Principal

May _____, 2002

Dear _____;

I am presently a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan working toward a Master of Education degree. I would like to request your permission to conduct a research study at _____ School that would involve a case study of one teacher _____ (teacher's name). The teacher has already agreed unofficially to participate in the study.

My thesis topic is a healing approach to teaching as practised by a particular teacher. The literature discusses a healing approach, but provides few examples of healing teaching in action. I am interested in discovering what strategies are used by this teacher to begin and to enhance healing of at-risk student. I also wish to find out what beliefs about teaching inform her strategies.

My research will consist of a study of a single case, that of an exemplary high school teacher. Data will be collected in the form of semi-structured interviews with the teacher, participant observation of only the teacher working in her classroom and analysis of strategies and assignments (not completed by students) she uses.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the participant and the site will be protected through the use of pseudonyms. The results of the study will be published in a thesis and may also be used for publication in scholarly journals or for conference presentations. However, at all times, the names of the participant and the school will remain anonymous. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The participant will have the right to withdraw without any type of penalty. A description of the study will be presented to the participant in the form of an ethics contract requesting her consent to participate.

Every effort will be made to safeguard the anonymity of the teacher. It is possible, however, because of this individual's status as a well-known teacher in the school system, that readers of the study may realize her identity. The steps put in place to protect the teacher's identity may not be sufficient.

I will be interviewing the teacher to investigate her beliefs about teaching and how those beliefs inform her practice in her classroom. All of our conversations will be audio taped to facilitate further review. The participant will be invited to review the first level analysis of the data for accuracy and to ensure anonymity.

At the end of the study, all study results and associated material, including tape recordings, interview transcripts and observation notes will be safeguarded at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years. This procedure is in accordance with the guidelines set by the Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research at the University of Saskatchewan. At that time, the tape recordings will be

erased and the observation notes and interview transcripts will be destroyed. If the participant withdraws from the study, the tapes, transcripts, and observations will be destroyed.

I anticipate that any knowledge gained will have real potential for the improvement of teaching practice with at-risk student. Further information on the study may be obtained from my advisor, Dr. Larry Sackney, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan at 966-7626 or me, at 955-0058.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Roberta Boire, Graduate Student
Department of Educational Administration
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan
28 Campus Drive
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0X1

APPENDIX C

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Initial Semi-Structured Interview

1. Could you tell me about a student you remember when you started at this school who was in need of help and how you worked with that student?
2. What are the values that guide your work with these students?
3. What are your foremost objectives when meeting new students?
4. What beliefs about education do you stress with your students?
5. What is most important to you when working with at-risk students?
6. You have made it known that you wish to continue working with at-risk students. Why do you wish to remain working with these students?
7. Could you give me some examples of how you consciously try and address students holistically, in their mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects?
8. What are your beliefs about using art therapy with at-risk students?

Second Semi-Structured Interview

1. I see the "Circle of Courage" on the side board. You have studied the work of Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern. How have their theories and beliefs affected the way you teach and work with students?
2. "A book is always chosen for a reason" you told your students. What do you consider when choosing literature for the courses?
3. How do you decide how to deal with students' high absenteeism?
4. Sometimes you reprimand or correct students in front of the class and other times you do it one on one. How do you decide which approach to use?

5. Could you comment on humour and laughter in your classroom?
6. How often in a typical day would you have contact with other services/staff to help students?
7. You have spoken of the importance of recognizing the spirit in each student. What are some of the ways you do so?
8. Do you find you use your background experience in the North to connect with students?
9. What are the most important things you wish to teach students?

Third Semi-Structured Interview

1. Could you talk about how the demands of working with at-risk students have affected you personally?
2. You've spoken a bit about using journalling with your students. How do you use creative writing with your classes?
3. I've noticed you telling the students stories for what seemed like a variety of purposes. How do you see yourself using storytelling with students?
4. Can you comment on what you've seen "getting better" or "healing" seems to look like for students at this school?
5. If you could change anything about teaching these students, what would it be?
6. We haven't spoken much about the importance of hope to these students. Do you have some thoughts on hope and at-risk students?
7. Could we end with a recollection about a student who decided to accept your offer of help?

APPENDIX D

Documents and Field Notes Sample

INTERESTING ESSAY SUGGESTIONS

- 1 **ANTI-WAR FEELING**--make a list of 6 - 8 different reasons for which there should be no war (political, economic, ecological, humanitarian, etc. ...develop each reason in its own independent paragraph.
- 2 **Imagine that you are an archaeologist** of the year 3,000 and that you have just dug up some curious object which was, as far as you can tell, the personal possession of a teen-age student in the 1990's. Write a short composition in which you try to identify the object and to imagine to what now-outmoded use it must have been put by its youthful owner.
- 3 **AUTOMATIC WRITING** Sit motionless for ten minutes in silent meditation. Now take pen in hand and for the next twenty minutes write whatever random thoughts or impressions occur to you, without making any attempt to organise them into a coherent composition.
4. **Write an objective description of your family automobile.** In the first paragraph, describe the car's exterior design. Second paragraph--interior design providing realistic details. Third paragraph, describe the automobile's performance on the road. In the final paragraph, narrate some anecdote which will indicate your psychological relationship to the car. (affection? hatred? jealousy? pity? etc.)
- 5 **BEHAVIOUR JUSTIFICATION** Narrate some real or imaginary example of bizarre social behaviour. Imagine 3 or more different explanations or causes for that behaviour. Explain each of these theoretical causes in separate, well-developed paragraphs.
- 6 **BROKEN PROMISE** Write an original anecdote or short story which is constructed upon the theme of a broken promise. Emphasise the feeling of guilt which obsesses the person who breaks the promise. Analyse also the disillusionment of the person to whom the promise was made.
- 7 **CAPITAL PUNISHMENT** Draw up a list of reasons why many people oppose capital punishment. Draw up a second list of reasons why other people favour capital punishment. Incorporate this material into an extended essay. Conclude the essay by stating your personal position in the matter.
8. **CHARACTER COMPARISON** Think of a friend or acquaintance who has a very distinctive personality. Now think of another friend or acquaintance who has an opposite personality. Write a composition emphasising the contrasts between these two personalities. Use many examples to bring out these differences.
- 9 **CHARACTERISTIC ODOURS** Select 5 different, highly distinctive odours. Write a separate paragraph characterizing each of the odours. Use at least 6 different adjectives or images in each of the descriptions. (try reading the description to

someone and see if they can guess what odours you have in mind)
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10 CHRISTMAS GIFT LIST -- Compile a list of 10 different public figures from all walks of life. Pretend that you are going on a shopping trip to buy Xmas gifts for these individuals (money is no object!) For each of the figures, compose a short paragraph stating what gift you plan to buy and why. Treat the assignment in a humorous way.

11 HAIR STYLES Pretend that you are writing an instruction manual for an introductory course in hair-styling (select 3 or 4 styles) Use clear language so that a reader could indeed create this hair style--but have fun with it.

12 COMPLAINT TO THE MANUFACTURER Write a letter to a manufacturer in which you complain about some fault (real or imagined) in a commercial product that he sells. Be as objective and logical as possible in your presentation. Write a second letter in which the manufacturer tries to calm the irate customer. Submit the 2 letters together as a single composition.

13 CRAZY INVENTION Imagine you are a mildly insane scientist or engineer who has just invented some unique gadget or machine calculated to simplify modern life. Draw a sketch of your invention and then write an expository narrative which explains in detail all the functions and relationships of the different parts illustrated in the sketch.

14 CULTURAL AFFAIRS SURVEY Study and think of the entertainments and different types of cultural activities which are available to the community. (check newspapers) Conclude your report either by praising the community for the richness of its cultural life or by lamenting the absence of well-rounded cultural progress.

15 DEAR ABBY LETTER Write a one-page letter to your former sweetheart, explaining that your relationship must terminate because someone new has come into your life. Use gentle but firm language trying not to hurt any more than absolutely necessary.....

16 DEFINITION OF ABSTRACTION Select some abstract value in which you are interested: love, friendship, justice, honour, power etc. Write a composition defining or characterising your chosen value. In the first part of the composition, supply a theoretical evaluation. In the second part, provide 2 or 3 practical examples from your own personal experience.

17 DO-IT-YOURSELF ART Imagine that you are a manufacturer of some kind of do-it-yourself art or craft kit found in hobby shops. Compose step-by-step instructions which you will include in the kit for the convenience of the purchaser.

18 DREAM HOME Draw a rough floor plan of the house in which you would like to be living when you are between forty and fifty years old at the summit of your professional career. Describe the floor plan and your rationale.

19 DREAM TRIP Imagine that you have unlimited financial resources and leisure time. Plan an imaginary trip to ten of the world's great cities distributed among 10 different countries. Write a composition outlining the route you will follow to get to each of these cities and explaining why you have chosen each one.

20 DRIVER'S MANUAL Pretend that you work in the office which has the responsibility of preparing next year's driver's manual. You are personally charged with preparing the text of ten different traffic rules or procedures. Submit the ten rules and the reasons as a piece of writing.

21 RACISM You are on a committee to prevent any kind of racism. This includes not only cultural racism, but the stereotyping experienced by people of different age groups, "size" of an individual, intelligence, economic status in society and the variety of handicaps experienced by a large portion of our society. What would you do? Would there be societal rules for people to live by?

22 EATING "CROW" Write a short autobiographical essay describing a time when you were forced (under embarrassing circumstances) to change an opinion of yours. Describe the events that led to this situation--the shame or embarrassment which you felt at having to reverse an earlier opinion.

23 EATING HABITS Without being obvious--watch closely the table manners and eating habits of others. Try to write the descriptions with such detailed precision that your reader will almost be able to see a concrete, visual image of each diner in action.

24 FAIRY TALE MODERNISED Narrate a familiar fairy tale (Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Three Bears, etc) in the style of your own speech. That is to say, use generous supplies of the slang and clichés which constitute such a high percentage of informal student language.

25 FANTASY AUTOBIOGRAPHY Write an imaginary autobiography of yourself. Represent your family background as being quite out of the ordinary and your adventures as being most unusual.

26 FORCED SYMPATHY Select some public figure whom you dislike intensely. List 5 reasons for which you dislike this individual. State each reason in a coherent, independent sentence or paragraph. Now force yourself to think of 5 favourable characteristics or activities associated with your subject and for which you could respect him/her if it were not for the negative features already cited..

27 FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH Think of an elderly person whom you admire very much. Try to imagine what that person was like when he or she was young. Write a composition recreating this youthful personality. Do not fail to state on what evidence

your evaluation is based.

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29 **GENERATION GAP** Compose an original anecdote or short story in which two persons are brought into dramatic conflict because they do not belong to the same age group, and because they have widely differing social philosophies. Try to narrate the story from a double point of view so that each of the two protagonists is portrayed as being prejudiced against the other--let the guilt for the social misunderstanding be equally shared by both parties.

30 **GHOST STORY** Compose an original ghost story like those told around the campfire.....there are many oral stories among family and friends that you can draw from....

31 **GOURMET MEAL** Describe a gourmet meal which you have eaten or would like to eat. Include at least 6 different dishes.....do not fail to include descriptions of the items....describe the room in which the meal is served and table decorations

32 **GUEST EDITORIAL** Pretend that you are an important member on the writing staff of a local newspaper. Write an original editorial on some social problem of regional or national interest. Handle the assignment from either a serious or a humorous point of view.

33 **HISTORICAL PROPHECY** Imagine that you are a clairvoyant or a fortune-teller. Write a paper describing some startlingly unique political adventure in which you predict Canada will become embroiled in the new millennium.

34 **HUMAN RIGHTS CREDO** Compose a list of 10 human rights to which you think every individual is entitled. Declare each right in the form of an independent sentence or paragraph beginning with the phrase "I believe....." Work out your declarations carefully, avoiding repetitions or overlappings of subject matter from one section to the next.

35 **LETTER TO THE EDITOR** Select some aspect of your present school program (academic or extra-curricular) which displeases you. Write the editor of the school paper an imaginary letter in which you outline the nature of your discontent. Be specific in enumerating the different facets of the problem about which you are complaining. Be equally specific in outlining a hypothetical remedy for the problem.

ENGLISH 20

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

40 MARKS

This research paper's topic will deal one of the "areas of concern" that young people today are faced with.

Research should come from at least two sources. These sources should be qualified in your bibliography. Footnotes will be used when paraphrasing or quoting from your source.

Please follow an essay format. This should include a title page and a separate page for your bibliography. Preference for your completed essay is a typed copy that is double spaced. If you do not use a computer, please be sure that your work is neat and double spaced.

Include your rough copies with your final essay. Organizational notes should also be included.

Suggested topics:

- dress styles for youth
- teen runaways (street kids)
- eating disorders
- music (influence)
- euthanasia
- adoption
- drinking/driving
- suicide
- abuse
- divorce
- teen prostitution

--these are only suggestions--if you have a topic that you would like to pursue, please check with me before beginning.

02/05/13 continued

Student comes in late. S. goes over when he sits down, speaks quietly to him.

S: "Hello; how are you? I missed you on Friday. Are you okay? Did your sister find you?"

Student responds and S. gives instructions about work missed, gives some examples and options. (Student seems positive and responds immediately to questions.)

I am trying not to make it obvious that I am observing as S. has me here as using the space just to do work. It's really hard to watch S. and the class and not be noticed. I don't want to influence the students' behavior and have this disturb S.

Students are all reading. S. is circulating, speaks to two students, asking questions about where they are in the novel.

On the front board - "A success is a failure with a fresh coat of paint."

S. is at the front of the room, looking like she is ready to say something.

S: "Okay everyone. Let's put aside your books for now. I have your journals to hand back and ohh, I did some writing back to you."

S. is handing out the books to each student. A couple don't get anything back. S. asks them where their journals are. One girl searches and S. keeps going.

S. "Thank you so much for your ideas in your writing. I enjoyed reading these. Please read what I wrote back to you." Reminds students about ideas sheet for journal topics.

Students look through their journals, appear to be reading her comments.

Two boys are talking. One of them asks why S. wrote so much in his journal. S. laughs.

It sounds like he is complaining about her writing back to him. He can't realize how much time it takes to write back to everybody.

S: Smiling "I do things for you and do them because you deserve it. I do it because you are special." (Student smiles.)

Way to put a positive spin on it!

Student comes in really late (25 minutes). Looks rough. Sarah goes over to her as girl finds a desk. S. speaks softly but loud enough for us to hear her in room.

"Oh! How are you? You look so ill! Did you go to the doctor yet? Your eyes look awful. Will you promise me you'll go today after school?"

02/05/13 continued

Students seems okay with the questions and responds. Student asks about her journal - it wasn't handed in, can she still hand it in, has she lost marks.

S. to class (They are still reading in their journals or getting books out) "If you're sick, you don't get marks off. Absolutely not! If there's a problem, come and see me. I want you to do as well as you can. The late mark policy is just for people who are warming a desk. You've seen these people. We don't have any of those in here though. We have a great bunch! And remember, I don't want you to fall behind. Come see me."

"Okay everybody, let's have a look at the chapter questions. Where are you at? Let me have a look. Open those books"

S. circulates, looking at the notes.

S: "It looks like most people could use a little more time to work on Chapter Four questions. If you are done those questions, you can move on to the next chapter. Either read or work on the questions. I want to go through them together and hear from you. I have to keep you honest, you know!"

Students shuffle around, one asks for notes he lost. They seem to settle in to work.

There seems to be a definite routine here that everyone knows. Class is going smoothly for the most part.

A couple of boys aren't doing much but talking. S. goes over to them. One boy seems to have a hard time sitting still. S. talks to him, whispers,

S: "Yesterday you worked so well all through class. You can do that again today and get those questions done" Smiles at him.

Boy smiles and says something about yesterday being Sunday. (Ha, ha)
S. smiles and asks if he wants a little "one on one" - maybe she could read to him? she suggests. Little laugh from S. He refuses and pulls his novel out.

S. gets some papers from her desk (marks?) walks around the room some more. She touches them on the shoulder when she wants their attention. She is asking about missing assignments, really quietly. A couple of students hand her papers - assignments?

She seems careful to be quiet. This could be just so she doesn't disturb anyone but I suspect it's so the other kids don't hear what is missing for assignments. ASK her about this.

Two boys are still talking. S. looks over at them and says a bit sternly, "Guys, you came in late and now you need to work. What? Why didn't you tell me that before?"

Student says he doesn't have the questions. S. goes to files and pulls out papers and